Wednesday, July 8, 2009 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 24 / No. 210 P18

METRO / A20
OFW who returned P2.1M back from HK, thanks to cash rewards

WORLD / A21
Robert McNamara, US defense secretary during Vietnam War, dies; 93

NEWS / A4
Ebdane briefed on DILG operations as acting interior secretary

WORLD / A22
Ousted Honduran president in Washington for talks with US State Secretary Hillary Clinton

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

NBI: Hospital not Palace asked for probe of leak

By Tina G. Santos and TJ Burgonio

MALACAÑANG HAS taken a hands-off stance in the investigation of the leak on the breast implants of President Macapagal-Arroyo, according to...

NBI HOSPITAL, A6

RUMBLINGS The country's most active volcano, Mayon, is grumbling these days and the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) is scheduled to arrive today to rush the installation of new monitoring devices to come up with complete data on the volcano's escalating activities to determine whether there is a need to raise the alert level. Famous for its nearly perfect conical shape, the volcano has erupted 50 times since 1616.

Bombs rock Jolo, Iligan

2 killed, 36 hurt in attacks

By Inquirer Mindanao

JOLO, SULU—A WAVE OF bombings appears to be in the works, with three more bomb attacks occurring in parts of Mindanao after the deadly explosion in Cotabato City on Sunday.

At least two people were killed and at least 36 others were injured in the explosions that hit Jolo and Iligan City yesterday. A town of National Transmission Corp. (Transco) in Buenavista, Lanao del Norte, was also bombed on Monday night.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Shortly before yesterday morning's explosion in Jolo, police officers were heading unbeknown away from a suspected bomb discovered near the Colcon gas station on Jordan Street.

It turned out that the suspected bomb was not intended to go off, and the onlookers had returned to a spot

BOMBS, A6

HINDING THE STORE President Arroyo reads through the PNP's incident report on the bombings, which she calls "pre-State-of-the-Nation," referring to her upcoming State of the Nation Address, during the command conference she convened in the Palace on Tuesday. The PNP theorizes that the Mindanao bombings were "test missions" of terrorists who had just finished their improvised explosive device training.

Cabinet revamp tied to emergency rule

By Christine O. Avendaño and Fe Zamora

THE STATE OF BOMBINGS AND A RE-painted glass in redoubtable President Macapagal-Arroyo's Cabinet members concerned with national security policies could be a prelude to the imposition of emergency rule, according to former Senate President Franklin Drilon.

Drilon yesterday said that sources had told him that the President was about to reshuffle Cabinet people on top of security policies amid a series of bombings in the country.

Drilon said his sources had told him that Presidential Management Staff chief Hermogenes Esperon would be designated defense secretary and Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro would move to the Department of Justice.

Justice Secretary Agnes Devanadera would go back to her post as Solicitor General.

From being adviser in charge of the

CABINET, A4

25M voters may have to register again, says Comelec

By Leila B. Salaverria

ABOUT 25 MILLION OF THE 48 MILlion registered voters may have to register again.

Those are people who had enlisted with the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to vote but had not turned in their biometric information—a digitally captured picture, fingerprint and signature.

They would, however, still be allowed to vote even though they don't have the biometrics material, Comelec Commissioner Rene Sarmiento told reporters yesterday.

"While we can compel voters to undergo biometrics, there can be no penalty because the right to vote is not a criminal offense under the Constitution," he said.

Sarmiento said that all voters, including those who had registered earlier, were obliged to submit their biometrics after this was made mandatory under the law allocating funds for the automation of the 2010 elections.

25M VOTERS, A13

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING As it was at Edsa I, ex-President Fidel Ramos rejoins at the healing Mass for ex-President Cory Aquino on Tuesday one of the enduring moments of the People Power Revolution when he held aloft the statue of Our Lady of Fatima.

GMA meet with next CBCP head raises questions

By Christian V. Esguerra

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO has met with the prelate touted to be the next president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), raising questions within the influential organization about what she may be up to.

The meeting between Ms Arroyo and Bishop Nereo Odchimar of Tandag, Surigao del Sur, took place on Monday, or days before the bishops are to elect the successor of Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, according to two sources in the CBCP.

The sources, who asked not to be

GMA MEETING, A6

MJ tribute could be biggest celeb send-off of all time

A WORLD MOURNING AND MOONwalking in memoriam was to bid a final farewell to Michael Jackson early today in what could be the biggest, most spectacular celebrity send-off of all time.

Nearly two weeks after the death of the tragic "King of Pop," America was expected to grind to a standstill while other nations—even Burma—braced for a late-night vigil for his private funeral and star-studded memorial service on Tuesday in Los Angeles.

Ecstatic fans who won the lottery for seats at the memorial received tickets and wristbands that will get them into the 20,000-seat Staples Center, where entertainers like Stevie Wonder, Mari-

JACKSON, A13

WORLD UNITES TO MOURN FALLEN IDOL In Frankfurt, Germany, a gathering of Michael Jackson fans holds memorial rites, as they are doing the world over in the final memorial for him is held at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.

Bookies using text messages make betting easy

By Francis T.J. Ochoa, Jasmine W. Reyes and Cedelf P. Tapao
Inquirer Sports

(Third of four parts)

THERE'S ANOTHER REASON GAME fixing has become rampant in the collegiate ranks, and why it's difficult for school authorities to put a stop to it: Technology has made betting so easy while no fool-proof method has yet been created to spot a "fix."

Underground bookies send odds by text message to those interested 10 minutes before a game. Money changes hands in a private rendezvous, or is deposited in bank accounts.

In the recent National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) game between San Beda and Arellano, the bettors received through a bookie odds that had the Lions -14.5 favorites and the Chiefs +13.5 underdogs.

That means if you wagered for Arellano, you won even if the Chiefs lost by 13 points. If you bet for the Lions, they have to win by 15 points or you can only win (the 0.5 points is to prevent ties).

SPECIAL REPORT Game Fixing

St. Bernie Ora, the La Salle vice president for external affairs, said that games become suspicious once the odds are reflected in the game.

"Sometimes, you see these odds and they're really almost how the game turns out so you have to wonder," Ora said.

San Beda defeated Arellano, 102-74, in that game.

BOOKIES, A6

Fil-Ams caught in frenzy; circus comes to town

By Rubee and Janet Nepales
Los Angeles correspondents

LOS ANGELES—LIKE MILLIONS OF Michael Jackson fans around the world, many Filipino admirers of the King of Pop in the Los Angeles area were caught up in the frenzy of his burial and memorial preparations.

Jackson was to be buried in a private

FIL-AMS, A13

WEATHER FORECAST

FRIDAY: Tuguegarao, Aparri and Northern Luzon will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms, while the rest of the country will have partly cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mainly in the afternoon or evening.

Baguio	Partly cloudy	Naga	Mostly cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly cloudy	Cebu	Mostly cloudy
Legaspi	Partly cloudy	Tacloban	Mostly cloudy
Dagupan	Partly cloudy	Gen. Santos	Mostly cloudy
Iloilo	Mostly cloudy	Zamboanga	Mostly cloudy
Cagayan de Oro	Mostly cloudy	Davao	Mostly cloudy
Metro Manila	Mostly cloudy		

Second FRONTPAGE

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EZ2*
2nd Draw: 21 30
3rd Draw: 6 31

SUERTRES*
2nd Draw: 8 6 9
3rd Draw: 9 2 7

6/42 LUZ-VIS-MIN
3 6 24 28 32 40
P7,291,045.80

SUPERLOTTO 6/49
7 16 22 43 44 49
P19,642,460.40

Chiz, Loren see rice kickbacks

By Michael Lim Ubac

OPPOSITION SENATORS FRANCIS "CHIZ" ESCUDERO AND Loren Legarda yesterday suggested that officials close to Malacañang may have made kickbacks of as much as P13.1 billion from the allegedly overpriced rice imports from Vietnam last December.

The two said they suspected high-ranking officials in the National Food Authority and the Department of Agriculture of having financially benefited from the government-to-government transaction.

According to a Reuters report, the Philippines paid almost $300 a ton for 1.5 million tons of rice that is bought from Vietnam earlier this year, or more than $100 a ton more than its actual cost.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap did not disclose how much the government had paid, but said the differential was not unusual for a government contract and that it was "a good deal at the time."

Deserving scrutiny

Legarda, chair of the Senate committee on agriculture and food, said that the Senate's report that the Philippines had paid 43 percent more for its Vietnamese rice importations deserved scrutiny.

"This is not just a question of margins, which could mean another example of prepurchase government corruption. There is also the long-range need for the Philippines to stop being dependent on importation for its food staple," she said.

Escudero said his "estimates show that the government may have lost [from] P5.7 billion to P13.1 billion in kickbacks in the importation of 1.5 million tons of rice from Vietnam early this year."

He said the alleged kickbacks were more than enough to pay for the P4.9-billion budget for farm-to-market roads and P6.3 billion allocated for the purchase of fertilizers in 2009.

Reviewing policy

Legarda said it was necessary to review and revise the government's rice production policy to save the country from the huge costs of rice importation.

With a burgeoning population and long experience in interstate rice cultivation, it is difficult to understand why the Philippines has plunged into rice sufficiency dependence, she said.

"The only reason for this is government inefficiency or the adoption of the wrong policy," she said.

Escudero said the rice-import dependence policy would only continue to weaken the agriculture sector and further entrench rural poverty.

What the government should do, he noted, is boost domestic rice production by giving farmers incentives.

One way to lessen dependence on imported rice is to plant other grains that can be harvested five a year, he said.

Escudero cited as Online Inquirer.net story that rice production in the country would fall from 30 to 70 percent by 2020.

Falling yield

The Oxfam report said rice-producing countries will be hit hard by climate change, and that farm yields will drop by an average of 10 percent for every one-degree Celsius rise in global temperature.

That should spur the rural administration to reverse this rice-import dependent policy, said Escudero.

Agriculture officials insisted on Monday that the price of rice imports from Vietnam in December surged from $456 to $459 per ton, contrary to claims that it was only $390 per ton.

Based on the December rates, the Philippine government obtained a good deal at the time because the actual import price agreed upon by Manila and Hanoi was $509.50, when you include the add-on costs like freight, bid and performance bonds, surveyor's fees, and the cost of money arising from the Philippine government's payment of the imports not in cash but on a deferred credit basis of six months," Agriculture Undersecretary Bernie Fondevilla said in a statement on Monday.

"There was no $100 per metric ton rice in December last year," Fondevilla said.

CHINESE VISITOR
Liu Qi, a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, is welcomed upon his arrival by Japan Lois Tan and Ambassador-at-large to China and Philippine Sports Committee chair Harry Angping upon his arrival yesterday. Liu, here on the invitation of Speaker Prospero Nograles, is expected to call on President Macapagal-Arroyo, Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim and Nograles in the next two days.

FVR: We owe Cory debt of gratitude

FOR LEADING THE COUNTRY'S return to democracy, former President Cory Aquino deserves the "everlasting accolades and eternal gratitude" of the Filipino people, former President Fidel V. Ramos said at the funeral Mass yesterday for the ailing Aquino at the Greenhills chapel in Mandaluyong.

"The Filipino people owe Ms Aquino an eternal debt of gratitude, and she deserves the people's everlasting accolade. We wish her well and we hope that she can get over this crisis," said Ramos, Aquino's military chief of staff and defense secretary who succeeded her to the presidency in 1992.

Spokesperson Deedee Siytangco yesterday said Aquino was in stable condition and has been eating some food.

She said the former president needs concentration during a Mass facilitated by her confidante, Fr. Cristino Arevalo, in her room at the Makati Medical Center on Sunday.

Aquino, 76, was brought to the MMC on June 21 for weakness and loss of appetite. She was diagnosed with colon cancer early last year.

Fr. Orestes Castro, chaplain of Mrs. Marcos made an offering of a replica of the image of Our Lady of Fatima which he held during the four-day People Power revolution in 1986, to John I, that ended the Marcos dictatorship and swept Aquino into power.

Meanwhile, Sorsogon Vice Gov. Fredmund B. Marcos Jr., a son of the late dictator, yesterday released a statement on Aquino on behalf of his family.

"With the rest of the nation, my family and I have watched with sadness the serious turn in President Corazon Aquino's health condition. Being a former President of the Republic, we can relate to what she and her family are sincere hope and prayers for her swift recovery," the statement said. Al Zamora

Battle of surveys: Who do you trust?

By Michael Lim Ubac

WHO DO YOU TRUST? AMONG HERE firms, that is.

According to the April 16-May 8 nationwide survey conducted by Social Weather Stations (SWS), Sen. Manuel Villar is the most trusted officialin the land.

The SWS found that of 1,000 respondents, 79 percent had "much trust" in Villar while only 11 percent had "little trust," giving him a net trust rating of +62.

Villar was followed by Senators Miriam Santiago (+53), Francis Escudero (+52) and Loren Legarda (+49). Vice President Noli de Castro (+28), Sen. Panfilo Lacson (+20) and former President Joseph Estrada (+11).

All of the above, except for Lacson who has changed his mind, are casting a multi eye on the presidency in 2010.

A survey conducted by another polling firm, however, found that Nene Escudero, Villar and Legarda are in a virtual dead heat as the most trusted public official.

Pulse Asia's May 6-17 survey showed Nene with a "big trust" rating of 73 percent, followed by Escudero (71 percent), Villar (70 percent) and Legarda (69 percent).

Vice President De Castro received a rating of 48 percent, while President Macapagal-Arroyo brought up the rear at 22 percent.

While strictly speaking both surveys compare and should not be compared, they show how public confidence runs high with different results or basically the same quarters.

The SWS survey, which had a margin of error of plus or minus 3.2 percent, was part of the periodic survey on presidential preferences for the 2010 elections.

But it also showed Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile (-13) and Speaker Prospero Nograles (-33) both getting negative net trust ratings, the lowest ever received by the leaders of the two chambers of Congress.

The operative SWS asked was: As mga sumusunod, masiri bang sabihin ninyo kung ang pagkilalanin ninyo kay (personality) ay napakalaki, medyo malaki, hindi rin/di kung malaki o maliit, medyo maliit, napakaliit, o wala pa kayong narinig o nabasa/ Ayaw/ na ituloy/ sagutin/ ang tanong?

(If the following, can you say if you trust in (personality) is big, somewhat big, undivided, somewhat small, very small, or you haven't heard or read anything about [name].)

The Pulse Asia survey, meanwhile, used face-to-face interviews with 1,200 respondents aged 18 and older. It had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Pulse Asia formulated its question this: Alamat kung pakinggan ninyo kung gaano kalaki o kaliit ang iyong pagtitiwala kay (personality)? (Alamat: ko ninyo na sa ay nakalaap-malaki, malaki, maaaring malaki, hindi rin naman malki, malki o maliit na malaki o wala?

(Can you say how much or how little you trust (personality)? Can you say that you have: very big trust, big trust, undivided, small trust or very small/no trust?)

The survey also showed Escudero planning second to De Castro in a very close race with three other presidential aspirants if the elections were held today.

De Castro topped the poll with 18 percent, closely followed by Escudero at 17 percent, former President Joseph Estrada at 15 percent, Villar at 14 percent and Legarda at 12 percent. Ronna replied at stock with dyspepsia.

Escudero's office was quick to issue a statement, pointing out that the senator had consistently received high trust ratings among select public officials in four surveys conducted by Pulse Asia in the past year.

It noted that the 39-year-old Escudero was the only one among five probable presidential candidates whose rating did not dip below 70 percent, averaging 73.8 percent in the surveys conducted in March, July and October 2008 and February and May 2009. With Ayen Bedroso, Inquirer Research

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Ebdane is briefed on temporary turf

FIVE DAYS SINCE BEING APPOINTED ACTING Interior Secretary, former national police chief Hermogenes Ebdane was back in familiar turf, attending a briefing on how his new department worked at the Camp Crame headquarters of the Philippine National Police.

Ebdane, the current public works secretary who has also served as defense secretary, presided at a command conference on Monday and was briefed on the national security situation and the workings of the Department of Interior and Local Government.

Ebdane, who was PNP chief for two years until 2004, admitted to reporters that he was not familiar with the department.

Taking cue

"Honestly, I was surprised I was appointed temporarily (as Interior Secretary)."

Asked if there was any discussion of the so-called "August Moon" plot to put in crucial positions those generals deemed close to the administration, Presidential Management Staff-Armed Forces can stay in power, Ebdane said, "God knows we never talked about that."

He said he was taking his cue from other officials, trying to look at the perennial areas of concern and looking at the situation and identifying perennial flash points.

Malacañang appointed Ebdane acting DILG chief last week after Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno went to the United States to attend a family affair. Puno filed for leave until July 11.

Marine Corps, interior undersecretary for public safety, said Ebdane had to be given the security briefing as "he has to be familiar because there may be important matters to be discussed" with the President.

Ebdane was briefed on, among other things, last Sunday's deadly blast in Cotabato City.

"It was just a situation update on current events nationwide, general situation on crime, everything. This was planned days ago, before the blast. We're just updating the secretary of the current developments," said PNP spokesperson Senior Supt. Leonardo Espina.

He'll be back

Reached in the United States, Puno's spokesperson Brian Yamsuan swept aside questions about the former's exit plans, saying that Puno will be returning home and will continue to serve in the Cabinet.

"He will be back. He'll be returning. He knows a small family (is his) top priority (for his daughter's wedding)," said Yamsuan.

Yamsuan earlier denied a Malacañang statement that Puno was ill and had to go to the US for treatment. He said Puno had long planned to attend his daughter Tanit's wedding in San Francisco, California, on July 6.

It was Puno who recommended Ebdane to the PNP chief post in 2002, and later for the defense portfolio. — Tetch Torres, Gelo Gonzales, Ely Dalumpines

Corrections

IN THE JULY 3 ISSUE, a story on Page A2—"MILF claims killing 500 soldiers"—misstated the first name of the spokesperson of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The AFP spokesperson is Lt. Col. Romeo—not Roberto—Brawner Jr.

+++

IN THE JULY 4 ISSUE, a front-page story—"Tourists Thieves. The bees and more of life"—misspelled the surname of a Philippine Army lawyer's name: is Anthony Castelo—not Castelo.

+++

IN THE SAME issue, a story on Page A17 of the News section—"PDEA agents hold saturation drive on 'shabu' lounges"—misstated the date when the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency raided a lounge in Pasig City. The lounge was raided on June 19—not July 19.

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Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in stories to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 757 Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila, or fax them to 897-0782. Mrs. Teresita Ang-See, chairman emeritus of INQUIRER.net, may be reached at 897-0100, e-mail address is ang-see@inquirer.com.ph.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, July 6, 2005
14th Week in Ordinary Time
1st Reading: Gen 41:55-57; 42:5-7a, 17-24a
Ps: 105:1-5
Gospel:

Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority over the unclean spirits to drive them out and to heal every disease and ailment. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first Simon, called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew, the tax collector; James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananean, and Judas Iscariot, the man who would betray him. It was near these twelve to mission with the instructions: "Do not visit pagan territory nor do not enter a Samaritan town. Go instead to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim this message: The kingdom of heaven is near."

Commentary:

Joseph, son of Jacob, is famous for his coat of many colors and his ability to interpret dreams. But of Joshua, his brothers had sold him into slavery, but was freed and became chief minister to the Egyptian pharaoh. When his brothers came to Egypt to buy corn, it was enough, after they had suffered the pangs of hunger to them, so that they might repent of their misdeeds toward him.

Joseph sometimes seems harsh with those to whom he owes his fortune by so many favors. But what he has put in store many to assure them of God's providence in bringing good things long since said and done. Whenever we think we have had wrong done toward us, we should remember the wrongs we have done to others. When we dismiss others' sufferings, it is a reminder that we have a claim to mercy. For that we don't commend the sins committed against our suffering. Mind them who has God, we may expect cyber-theft.

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SC watchdog group bats for appeals justice

A WATCHDOG GROUP MONITORING PRESIdent Macapagal-Arroyo's impending appointments to the Supreme Court this year has recommended naming Court of Appeals Justice Martin Villarama to the high tribunal.

The Supreme Court Appointments Watch (Score) endorsed Villarama's appointment saying he reportedly topped the voting that the Judicial and Bar Council said the Supreme Court conducted on who should be included in the JBC shortlist.

"We believe that his track record in the Court of Appeals and his reputation for independence, integrity and probity make him eminently qualified for the Supreme Court," the Score said.

University of the Philippines professor Edmundo Hernandez, one of the Score leaders, said that among the outstanding qualities of Villarama was his reputation for not being cowed either by the appellate court justice has no batting of cases assigned to him, she said.

"Imagine, bringing that to the Supreme Court," said Monreal.

"Public trust in many of our government institutions has declined over recent years, the Supreme Court not being an exception," the Score said in its letter to Ms Arroyo.

"This public trust may be rebuilt by the appointment of men and women with unquestionable character and reputation for competence, integrity, independence and probity through an open and transparent process," it said. — Norman Bordadora

BI vows all-out fight vs red tape

RED TAPE WILL SOON BE WIPED OUT AT the Bureau of Immigration, the bureau said as it announced a program expected to facilitate the delivery of services to the public.

Associate Immigration Commissioner Ray Almosa, chair of the agency's committee on good governance (CGOG), said several projects aimed at modernizing and preventing red tape have been lined up for implementation during the second semester of the year.

Almosa, in a press statement, said the projects are pursuant to the provisions of the anti-red tape act and in line with the bureau's recent renewed action plan initiated by Commissioner Marcelino Libanan to institute a stronger watch effort among the bureau's employees and improve the quality of its services.

The program was launched last year with the launching of the Bias Issuance Made Simple (OMS) project, which cut the processing time and reduced the documentary requirements for visa applications by an average of 50 percent.

An anti-corruption campaign was activated previous being launched from the agency's premises for engaging in unsolicited transactions, the bureau said.

A national operations center was also established as monitor the bureau's activities throughout the country and 24-hour hotlines were installed to entertain complaints against illegal aliens and erstwhile queries from the public.

Almosa submitted a list of the bureau's anti-red tape projects in a recent letter to Chair Ricardo Saloma of the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

Imelda won't get jewelry after all, says DOJ

By Norman Bordadora

IT LOOKS LIKE FORMER FIRST LADY Imelda Marcos may not get to keep all that diamond-studded jewelry.

Justice Secretary Agnes Devanadera yesterday clarified that the government had not dropped its claims on the Marcos jewelry even most of the gems had been awarded to the government years ago.

Devanadera, concurrently the solicitor general, said that two of the three jewelry collections—Hawaii and Roumeldia—were no longer the subject of forfeiture proceedings because their ownership had long been settled in favor of the government.

"In fact, we are proceeding with the public auction with respect to the Hawaii and Roumeldiana collections," Devanadera said.

The entire collection of three sets—including the one known as Malacañang Reserve that is where it was found—is estimated to be worth over P13 billion.

The smallest of the three, the Malacañang collection, is currently the subject of forfeiture proceedings in the Sandiganbayan.

On Monday, the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) filed a motion for partial summary judgment to enforce the set.

In a statement, the OSG said it was confident the Malacañang collection would also be forfeited in favor of the government.

It said that the government had always insisted that the Marcos assets worth billions of pesos were "manifestly disproportionate" to the income of the late strongman Ferdinand and his wife.

Subject of forfeiture

The former first lady, however, has remained steadfast in her bid to recover the jewelry.

Last month, Marcos wrote a letter to the Department of Justice demanding the return of the jewelry in the absence of any cases involving them.

Marcos's letter prompted then Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez to order the Presidential Commission on Good Government to reinvestigate the gems.

The PCGG, however, responded that the jewelry were the subject of forfeiture proceedings against the Marcoses.

Asked for comment yesterday, Marcos's lawyer Robert Sison said, "Our demand stays."

He said that if the government ignored the demand, "we will file criminal charges."

The OSG said the "D-Group" asset in Hawaii gave ownership of the Hawaii collection to the Philippine government on Oct. 18, 1990.

The collection was seized by the US Customs Service upon the Marcoses' arrival in Honolulu in 1986 after they fled the people power revolt that ended their rule in the Philippines.

The Roumeldiana collection, on the other hand, was seized by Philippine customs officials in March 1986 as it was being smuggled out of the country by a Greek friend of the Marcoses after whom the collection was named.

The collection, although believed to be part of their ill-gotten wealth, was never claimed by the Marcoses.

The Supreme Court, the OSG said, had ruled that the government's confiscation of the Roumeldiana collection was valid.

Both collections are now in the vaults of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

"The recovery of these assets will greatly help the government in pursuing its social development programs that will benefit the whole country," Devanadera said.

With a report from Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

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Customs take off by P20 B

THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS YESTERDAY said it failed to meet its target collection for the first half of 2009 by almost P20 billion.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales blamed the revenue shortfall on the significant decrease in the volume of imported merchandise because of the global economic crisis.

"Our importation is down. Just ask the NSO (National Statistics Office) and Neda (National Economic and Development Authority)," Morales said.

From January to June this year, Customs district ports across the country only collected P148.22 billion, or 38 percent short of its target of P234.95 billion, Morales said.

Last month alone, the Customs chief said the revenue collection fell by P5.2 billion.

Of the 17 Customs ports, only six were able to meet its target collection for the month of June.

Morales said the Port of Manila, one of the biggest international ports in the country, collected only P1.944 billion, missing its goal by more than 30 percent.

In an earlier interview, Morales said total imports during the first five months of the year only reached $16.6 billion, or roughly 26 percent less than the target of $22.39 billion.

"Our performance depends on imports because ours is an import-driven economy from a revenue scale. The indispensable equation is how importation equals less collection. Yet our targets largely remain the same, conditioned by real-unfolding economic realities such as a marked slowdown in inbound shipping traffic," Morales explained.

A significant drop in the volume of imported cruder oil resulted in a revenue loss of P4.94 billion for the government, he said.

Martha Ramos

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A.VENUE

Bombs rock Jolo, Iligan; 2 killed, 36 hurt in attacks

Romanga Al

where the real one was planted—some 30 meters from the gas station and about 50 meters from Mt. General Church.

When the smoke cleared, two persons—a man and a woman, both in their 60s—were dead and 17 others were wounded. Four passing Jeepneys were damaged.

Chief Supt. Ronald Jabarani, police director of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, identified those killed as Vicky Sia and Hamsirani Hamsh.

He said three police officers—SPO1 Mario Appang, PO3 Alexander Saludad and PO3 Nadzmer Adilhan—were among the injured.

Chief Insp. Tomasa Isil Flores, Jolo police chief, said the bomb could have been detonated by remote control because the timing was so precise.

Civilians reported seeing two men scrape on the blast site on hood scaffold for gathered the bomb fragments.

Church not the target

Brig. Gen. Mohammad Nur Jalakaar of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process said it was too clear to be the explosives was "public and in order" he had a connection with bomb attacks elsewhere.

But he stressed that the bomb was somehow near Mr. Carmel Church, as earlier reports had indicated.

Maj. Gen. Jasmin Bulilan, the military commander in Sulu, also said the church could not have possibly been the target. "It is about a block away," he pointed out.

Jewelry shop owner Ah Ong, who was about three blocks from the site, described the explosion as "powerful."

Said Adzahari: "There was a loud blast. The impact was quite great."

Maj. Gen. Ben Dolorfino, the Marine commander, surmised that "the three bomb was intended to maximize casualties."

Using initial investigation results, Dolorfino said the bomb that exploded was similar to the motorcycle bomb that went off months ago near the provincial capitol complex in Patikul, narrowly missing Sulu Gov. Abdusakur Tan.

The bomb used in Tan's attempted assassination was the purported handiwork of the bandit group Abu Sayyaf.

Car bomb

A car bomb exploded in Illigan City around three hours later preventing succeeding at least nine persons including three soldiers.

The bomb went off near the Baguinlan Flyoverbup at the corner of Sabadao and Cabili streets at around 10:30 a.m., according to 1Lt. Rachel Candelaria, spokesman of the Western Mindanao Command.

Carbo said Capt. Edico Acebuche of the Army's Armored Division in Iligan was one of the three wounded soldiers.

According to Senior Supt. Leonardo Salas Fernando, the city police director, the soldiers were on a leisurely-type jeep that had just parked beside a volcanic Hood with the bomb.

THE RED CAR BOMB The remains of it are examined by a member of the military Explosives and Ordnance Division team along Sabayle Street in Iligan City on Tuesday. MARK CRISTINO/REUTERS

CRIME SCENE An unexploded mortar shell gets the attention of an American soldier who's helping in the investigation following the explosion on Tuesday. Two people were killed and 29 wounded, many of them in critical condition.

Bulilan said the bomb was detonated by cell phone. "We are still investigating it," he said.

Lt. Col. Arnulfo Ely, commanding officer of the Army's 43rd Infantry Battalion, said the city had been put under full alert.

2 of 4 explosives

Four explosives were used in the bombing of the Transco tower in Barangay Upper Dulaan, Enanerayan, Lanao del Norte, at around 11 p.m. on Monday.

Only two of the explosives went off but the tower was toppled, engineers from Transco Corporation, Lanao district manager of Mindanao Grid Corp. (MGC) of the Philippines, said yesterday.

He said the explosion resulted in the shutdown of the Iligan-Aurora line.

Cardaga said an emergency restoration system was used while the damaged towers were dismantling the toppled structure to rebuild a new steel tower.

The explosion occurred after the discovery of similar bombs strapped onto an NGC tower in Iligan.

JDF's view

Said Ed Fabela, the civil-military affairs chief of the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF): "We tend to believe former Speaker Jose de Venecia's view that this is part of a national grand design leading to a military takeover."

Fabela pointed out that the bomb attacks were not only confined to Mindanao—"a very clear sign" backing the proposed "grand design."

He assailed the military for pinning such bomb attacks on the MILF.

"There are old songs. There are antiquated allegations. To settle this [matter] once and for all, an investigation has to be done, maybe with the participation of the international community," he said.

Act of extortion

The bomb attack that occurred on Sunday in front of a Catholic church in Cotabato City was carried out by local extortionists who might have been trained by foreigners, a military source said yesterday.

The church said no clear attack has done to six. (See story on this page.)

The military source, who requested anonymity for lack of authority to speak on the matter, said the target was not the church but a McDonald's restaurant famous from the explosion.

"The target was the fast-food chain beside the same shop where the bomb exploded," he said.

The source said reconnaissance had earlier been planning the McDonald's Amusement, Quezon Ave.-Abreu.

"They demanded a huge amount of money and warned they will bomb his store. He did not report it to authorities. Had he reported it, the bomb attack could have been prevented," the source said.

The source said that according to the investigation, the bomb that was in a paper box was originally placed in front of the McDonald's store but was picked up by a mentally ill man who himself was killed in the explosion.

"The guy thought the box contained food so he took it away," the source said. "He opened the paper box in front of the store shop just five meters away, and it went off."

The source said the extortion angle should enter suspicion that the MILF was behind the Sunday bomb attacks.

"That's the evil angle, but it's possible that those who planted the bomb received training from the Jemaah Islamiyah," he said.

But Lt. Col. Jonathan Dizon, spokesperson of the Army's 6th Infantry Division in Maguindanao, said the military still believed that the target was the church. He said the matter was still being investigated.

Suspected bomber freed

Panotes also said the suspected bomber, Rizo Torres Abierta, had been named over to the police.

But Senior Supt. Willie Bongcayao, police chief of Cotabato City, said reporters that Abierta, who was arrested shortly after the explosion, was released on Monday afternoon.

"There was no witness against him, so we released him," Bongcayao said.

The AFP's Kabuto said Abierta's release was not surprising.

"If he were a Muslim, he would have been charged already," Kabuto said.

On Monday, Presidential Assistant for Mindanao Jesus Dureza urged the people of Central Mindanao to unite against terror.

Orchestrated

"[These bomb attacks are] no longer isolated but orchestrated," he said, quoting the military.

But he added: "No evidence was given to me by the military about the involvement of the MILF."

Maj. Gen. Raymundo Ferrer, chief of the Eastern Mindanao Command, told the business that the immediate concern was to secure possible terror targets and bring Cotabato City back to normal as soon as possible.

"We are cooperating with the police in pursuing those who are responsible. Of course, we cannot discount the possibility of other major attacks from a terrorist attack. We are also looking at not only us, business, family and personal residents," Ferrer said.

Call for probe

Undersecretary Mike Defensor, deputy secretary general of the National Unity Council of the Philippines, described the Sunday explosion as barbaric.

"We call for an in-depth investigation. A third-party probe would be helpful. And we should not point to any organization without evidence," he said.

Mayor Muslimin Sema also said it was too early for "mudslinging politicians" to point the bomb attack as "an offshoot of a Christian-Muslim conflict." Reports from Julie Alipala, Ed Cueva, Rachel Uriel, Ric Obrigo, Jeoffrey Maitem, Edwin Fernandez and Noah Blanchon, Inquirer Mindanao

Year-old boy dies from 'severe shrapnel wounds'

A LITTLE BOY IS LOST Government officials led by Presidential Assistant on Mindanao Affairs Jesus Dureza (right) and DWSD Director Dominguito Tuko visited Jeffrey Sayre, a little over a year old, who was fighting for his life but lost to the Cotabato Regional and Medical Center. He was the 6th fatality in Sunday's bombing outside a road store near the Catholic Church.

ITTABATO CITY—THE YEAR-OLD CHILD who was among the 32 people wounded in the Sunday morning bomb attack in Cotabato City is dead.

Jeffrey Raven Sayre was gasping for breath when Presidential Assistant on Mindanao Affairs Jesus Dureza arrived at Cotabato Regional and Medical Center on Monday afternoon.

Dureza instructed the Department of Social Welfare and Development to give the child "special attention."

"I hope he will make it," Dureza said.

But the child expired a few hours later.

Public priest Fr. Edwin de Gracia told a local radio station that the boy succumbed to "severe shrapnel wounds" despite the efforts of government doctors to save him.

The boy, strong with his mother Lanny Sayre and two siblings, was at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral for Sunday Mass when the bomb went off across the street.

"Three of my kids were hit by shrapnel and Jeffrey was among those in serious condition," Lanny Sayre said.

Now she is filled with anger at the attackers. "I hope they will be captured," she said.

Jeffrey Sayre's death brings to six the death toll in Sunday's blast.

Senior Supt. Willie Bongcayao, city police chief, said at least five others were in critical condition in various hospitals.

Dr. Abdullah Dumarasa, Department of Health regional director, said his office would start timeline intervention among the students of Notre Dame of Cotabato (NDC) who were injured or traumatized by the explosion.

The NDC students served as sponsors of the 8:30 a.m. Mass at the cathedral. *Jeoff Ivy Maitem and Edwin O. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao*

Cabinet reshuffle may be linked to emergency rule, says Drilon

Romanga Al

Departments of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Public Works and Highways Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane would be its next secretary. (See related story on Page A4.)

"With Ebdane in DILG, emergency rule becomes more credible," Drilon quoted a source as telling him.

The former Senate President couldn't help but note that the designation of Ebdane as officer in charge of the DILG was a "first."

"We are concerned that this could mean the implementation of drastic measures, including emergency rule," Drilon said.

Placing the country under military rule "will not work," said former President Fidel V. Ramos, who was one of the implementors of martial law in 1972.

FVR to oppose martial law

"Martial law will not work in the Philippines. It did not work before," Ramos told the business yesterday after a briefing. Ebdane for his predecessor, Ronaldo Puno, who is briefing ramos.

Ramos made the statement amid reports that the rush of bombings in Mindanao was a prelude to martial law. "I will be the first to oppose them," he said of those who may be planning to return the country to military rule.

Ramos was chief of the Philippine Constabulary and Integrated National Police when President Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law in September 1972.

The declaration of martial law was preceded by a rash of bombings and an assassination attempt on then Defense Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile. The attempts was later found to be a hoax.

Ramos was also one of the "Rolex 12," a group of 18 military men and two civilians believed to be the architects of the 1972 declaration of martial law. The members of the Rolex 12 included the late Ramon Espino (then armed forces chief of staff), Enrile and Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr., then the governor of Tarlac.

Mind-conditioning

Drilon said that "these confluences of events" serve a "vague mind conditioning."

"This could be mind-conditioning and the reshuffle of the Cabinet in particular is the security area should be watched," he said.

Ongong Ryanman Malabayan (Bayan) shared Drilon's apprehensions, saying the bombings could either be to create an atmosphere of fear and insecurity, or to divert public attention from pressing issues and lay the basis for emergency rule.

"We should be vigilant...not just because of the bombings, but also because there may be some forces out to exploit the situation to create an atmosphere of fear and insecurity, or to divert public attention from pressing issues and lay the basis for emergency rule," Bayan secretary general Renato M. Reyes, Jr. said in a statement.

'Friendly coup'

Akbayan Rep. Risa Hontiveros said the bombings were meant to build a scenario to pave the way for Mr. Arroyo's [illegible] "friendly coup."

"What makes these bombings suspicious is that they are happening after National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales called for a constitutional revolutionary government which is to be headed by no less than Mrs. Arroyo," Hontiveros said.

Enrile appalled

Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile called on the police to get to the bottom of the bombings "to dispel those dangerous speculations as soon as possible," which included the government being behind the bombings it self.

"Already there are speculations that these bombings are some sponsored to pave the way for a "No-election" scenario," Enrile said in a statement.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, a former Armed Forces chief of staff, said he was bothered that the spate of bombings seemed to follow a pattern.

Condemning the bombings, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines asked the perpetrators to bring their senses to the proper fronts.

"We join the local bishops in their call for refraining we join the Pope in condemning recourse to violence in solving existing problems," CBCP president Archbishop Angel Lagdameo said.

Legislators said authorities should send a strong message that the terrorist attacks were wrong. With reports from DJ Yap, reporter, Bill Cabacungan, Michel Pepa, Norman Bordadora and Kristine Alave

Order to open books of Big 3 oil firms stays

By Tina G. Santos

AN ORDER FROM A MANILA judge directing the Commission on Audit and the Bureau of Internal Revenue and Customs to examine the "Big 3" oil companies' books of accounts stays.

This came after Judge Elvino Pampilo Jr. of the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 26 denied the motions for reconsideration seeking to stop his order which were separately filed by the Office of the Solicitor General and oil firms Chevron, Petron and Pilipinas Shell.

Pampilo earlier issued an order directing the CA, BOC and BIR to form a panel that would examine the cash receipts, cash disbursement books, purchase orders on petroleum products, delivery receipts, sales invoices and other related documents on the purchases of petroleum products of the three firms from January to December 2003.

The judge's order stemmed from the complaint filed by the local Action Society, a lawyer's group, which accused the oil firms of using pricing schemes grossly disadvantageous to the public.

The oil firms and the OSG, however, opposed the order saying the three agencies failed to conduct the examination task authority. They added that the books of accounts and other financial records of the oil firms had already been examined by SGV-Utreg based on a directive from the Department of Energy.

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Bombings prompt GMA to hold command conference

By TJ Burgonio and Tarra Quismundo

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO yesterday convened a command conference in Maguindanao amid the rash of bombings in Mindanao, which she authorities believed were "one mission" for new members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

"The purpose of this command conference is to do swift actions to help the victims and families of the Mindanao bombings, and investigate and plan to contain the seemingly planned coordinated events," she told Cabinet members.

She was referring to her State of the Nation Address later this month.

After Sunday's blast in Cotabato City, two bombings rocked Jolo and Digos City Tuesday morning.

In a press interview, Director General Avelino Razon of the Philippine National Police said police were looking into the possibility that the bombings were test missions for "renegade bombers" who recently finished their training in Mindanao.

THE SUBJECT IS GMRY A grim-faced President Arroyo presides over the command conference to tackle the resurgence of self-complained bombings with members of her Cabinet including, from left, PNP chief Hermogenes Esperon, Justice Secretary Agnes Devanadera, Public Works Secretary and acting Interior Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane, National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales, Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro and Press Secretary Cerge Remonde. (STORY CONTINUE)

Armed Forces chief of staff Gen. Victor Ibrado was more specific.

"The Special Operations Group of the MILF conducted three training [sessions] in different places in Maguindanao, and these are all about improvised explosive device training. We think that most of these bombings were done as a test mission for all those trainees that graduated," he said.

Both the military and police declared "full alert" in Mindanao and "heightened alert" in other areas in the aftermath of the bombings, according to Razon.

"We have directed our offices to assure our retail installations and immediately checkpoints. We have also deployed additional troops to those troubled areas," he said.

Ibrado said he had directed the commanders in the Western Mindanao Command and Eastern Mindanao Command to declare red alert and "strengthen their checkpoints."

"I have also instructed them to pursue the perpetrators and the leaders of the Cotabato and other places which are reportedly to be threatened by these bombings," he said.

In the PowerPoint presentation, Mercado said the police were looking into other reserves behind the three bombings.

He said the bombings could be aimed at diverting the Army's ongoing operations. These could also be extortion activities, retaliation for the murder of "high-risk detainees" from the Kidapawan provincial jail to the Davao jail, and a "show of force" before peace talks with the MILF resume, Mercado said.

Earlier in the day, Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro said that the authorities had yet to pinpoint the perpetrators, but said it would be a sign of goodwill on MILF's part if it condemned the bombings.

After dropping names of their suspects in the church bombing in Cotabato City, the military and police were noticeably silent on efforts in disclosing the identities behind the series of blasts that rocked Mindanao yesterday morning.

GMA meeting with next CBCP head raises questions

From page B1

support for lack of authority to discuss the matters, said Butuan Bishop Juan de Dios Pueblos, retired Dabaonon at the meeting.

"She probably wanted to make sure that the next CBCP president would be her man (too eye)," said one of the sources.

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde yesterday said he knew nothing about the meeting, but pointed out that it was "unfortunate" seeing with the President sitting down with the bishops before the latter met in plenary session.

"I think it's a good practice, very democratic, that even they're going to comment on control issues, it's better that they come into the side of the government from the high or official of the land," Remonde told the reporter.

He added: "I have very high respect, high regard, for our bishops. They are not easily influenced."

Ms Arroyo has been criticized for purportedly trying to influence the outcome of plenary assemblies—usually a postponed issue on key issues—by meeting with some bishops beforehand.

Precedents

In July 2006, two bishops admitted to the Inquirer that they were offered cash envelopes by Ms Arroyo's representatives in the middle of the CBCP assembly.

Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez Jr. of Dumaguete and Archbishop Ireneo Ledesma and Bishop Jose Manguiran—said they rejected the offer, with the latter describing the act as "shameless" (garapal).

At that time, the bishops were to tackle the public clamor to oust Ms Arroyo in

Sandigan affirms conviction of ex-cops

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

THE SANDIGANBAYAN (anti-graft court) Sandiganbayan has upheld its decision to convict three former police officials for spending P1.8 million for uniforms and combat equipment that were marked by poor performance.

"The Court finds no cogent reason to overturn its decision, reverse or modify its decision," the Sandiganbayan Fifth Division said in a resolution.

In its January 2009 decision, the court sentenced former superintendents Tito Lagos and Arturo Montano, chief inspector Salvador Garcia Jr. and businesswoman Margarita Tagaceo, the supplier of the uniforms, to up to 10 years in prison.

They were also ordered to pay back the money to the Philippine National Police (PNP).

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OPINION

Laying the predicate

THERE HAVE BEEN THREE BOMBINGS IN TWO days, beginning with the Sunday blast outside the Cotabato cathedral, then yesterday's blasts outside a Catholic church in Jolo and a bomb hidden in a vehicle in Ilipin City. The Armed Forces of the Philippines has been scrambling to point troops into those areas, while pointing at the Special Operations Group of the MILF as its prime culprit. The MILF has, so far, denied responsibility.

EDITORIAL

To be sure, a year ago today government representatives and the MILF were called to an informal meeting to defuse tensions arising from the deployment of troops near MILF bases. What followed was a rapid advance towards the conclusion of an agreement between the government and the MILF on the issue of ancestral domain.

While few observers noticed it at the time, President Macapagal-Arroyo, for the first time, announced, in her State of the Nation address last year that an agreement was at hand. What unfolded, after that, was a collusion between the government and the MILF together in an extensive alliance, and public opinion both in Mindanao and nationwide, which resulted in cases being filed that led the Supreme Court to declare as unconstitutional the memorandum of agreement creating the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity.

What we find curious, however, is that what would otherwise seem a plausible pretext for the wave of bombings targeting Christians in Mindanao—the looming anniversary of the failed SAF-MOA deal—has not been mentioned either by the MILF or the AFP. Instead, the government, for one, ascribes the bombings to retribution for or a diversion from ongoing military operations. The MILF, for its part, has taken a cue from those who believe the bombings are being perpetrated by the government itself.

There are, of course, obvious political benefits in an escalation of violence in areas that, like Ilipin City, were recalcitrant in objecting to the RH-MOA. Trouble in Mindanao provides the opportunity to move potentially restive troops out of the capital. This was how the government solved the problem of the mutinousness of the Philippine Marines: they were sent to fight rebels in Mindanao. The mutinous capitol, after all, can be subsequently (and more reliably) defended by the Philippine National Police, which has proven less prone to questioning the chain of command.

It is unavoidable that the bombings that have taken place in Cotabato, Jolo and Ilipin city being linked to the so-called bombings that took place in Quezon City recently. There can hardly be a basis for comparison, however, between the two sets of events. The only similarity we see at this point is that neither string of bombings has been claimed by any political group, while the government has done more finger-pointing than actual problem-solving.

Are we, perhaps, being unfair to the government? But then the government only needs what it sows: in this case, growing alarm over the timing of the bombings, representing an escalation in violence just when the government is feeling the least from its efforts to unseat the Constitution and the President's remaining years over her political plans for 2010 and beyond. All these stories have been swept aside by the bombings, and it seems highly implausible that the government's numerous enemies would want to cry in the favor of pre-terminating issues harmful to the administration.

The result is that the country is teeming with bomb hazards, just what will happen next, and where. Before the government is proving incompetent in intelligence-gathering, or it is being willfully blind to the possibility that agents provocateur could be hiding within its own ranks as much as within the ranks of those it considers the usual suspects.

Who is laying the predicate—by means of these bombings—and to what end? The bombings themselves, to Moros Muslim and Misulmans, are succeeding in sowing terror. They are not only causing the terrorist body count, but also the sense of invincibility among the public that is searching for a grimmer scenario to unfold.

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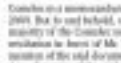

Neal H. Cruz

LAST JULY 1, SIX POSTS RAISE THE CASE OF Edgardo Tellado when the Commission en Banc must hand the reins by 65 votes over his rival, Jesus Typoco, by governor of Cagayan de Oro. The Comelec en banc issued a resolution on Feb. 28, 2009 declaring Tellado the winner. Before he could be formally proclaimed, however, Typoco went to the Supreme Court asking for a temporary restraining order. The TRO is still in force, but the votes will remain until you.

Will the Court in on the case until the votes expire? That would be no injustice to Tellado if he is eventually declared the winner. It would be an empty victory for him. TROs in the lower courts are limited to maximum of 60 days, but in the Supreme Court there is no time limit. Who decides the Court get it over with and find out who is the real winner?

Election lawyer Romulo Macalintal found an anomalous reply using the title of Typoco. It recounts those, how is the letter?

"1. The resolution of the Comelec in favor of Tellado was based on spurious documents. The documents of from by Precinct 1000Ex submitted by Tellado to the Comelec to allegedly correct a condition error in the certificate of canvass were spurious as per the results of the investigation conducted by the National Bureau of Investigation upon the direction of the Comelec dated. On June 16, 2009, Atty. Ferdinand Pelimaco, director of the Law Department, submitted the said NBI report to the Comelec en banc.

"2. No less than the official of the Election Records and Statistics Department (ERSD) of the Comelec indicated in the said ROWS on file with its department that the documents are 'false and 'cannot be trusted'. Even the chairman of the Municipal Board of Canvassers of the Municipality of Libo, Catanduanes State, stated in an affidavit that the said documents on file with the Comelec and used by the Comelec in its said resolution are 'false' and 'he] his signatures thereon are forged.

"3. All these evidence were submitted to the Comelec en banc memorandum on filed on Feb. 23, 2009. But to said behalf, on Feb. 26, 2009, the majority of the Comelec en banc, issued its said resolution in favor of Mr. Tellado without any mention of the said documents governing the spurious documents of the said documents. Comelec senior lawyers issued a very strong dissenting opinion because he was the only one who counted the said ROWs and his recommendation was to reverse the election returns in favor of Typoco. The votes are the said ROWs.

"4. In a word, the majority (four commissioners) who issued the said resolution did not even examine the ROWs on file with its ERSD. And this act proved by the logbook of the ERSD which shows that from 2:00PM until seven hours record it was brought to any of the officers of the aforesaid four commissioners. Hence the said Feb. 24 resolution was apparently prepared and signed by those commissioners before we could even the Typoco's motion/motion on Feb. 23 and without even reading this memorandum. Thus, my original before the Supreme Court that the said resolution was a nullification of the entire record (OSR) in Manila case wherein a justice of the Court of Appeals was dismissed from the service by the Supreme Court for rendering a decision without reading the memoranda of the parties. It would also be likened to the excuse by retired justice of the Supreme Court who also fined P100,000 by resident judge because to consider a draft decision even before the memoranda of the parties fell due.

"5. Comelec said it knows facilities and manpower to determine if said ROWs were false or not. Indeed, it has in the possession of the NBI. But as currently pointed out by Comelec en banc Resolution in another, in other words it is to warn that go beyond our usual understanding of it.

What has made us forget so easily the ills then of the past is the arrogance of the present. What has made us forget so easily the corruption of the past is the corruption of the present. Holding hunger pool pillage more thoroughly than the pillage of the present. Those others to conquer the costs of pillage brought by the Marcos and Estrada regimes. It seemed that the Marcos loot was bigger, though, not by a wide margin. The pillage of the present will always be a measure of light to assist in counter usage, rendering everything behind it and secured it dark and invisible. That is no particularly where the pillage of the present is comparable to that of the past, which the GMA regime's is—it exists the discovery of material lies in inconsistency, space from a site—making it a blinding light that makes everything behind it and around it pitch black.

I've always said that what rehabilitated the Marcos benchmen was not so much what they did but what their successors did. What's to that they did no better. They stole just as well, though in varying degrees. Today, they kill just as well.

It's in human nature. Former pains make you raise dark hedges by comparison.

Just as well, what has made us forget so easily the pillage of the past is that, well, I've always wondered if we truly had any real concept of pillage. Or if we truly understand any deeply reprehensible thing to it. Hence, once said that without every material wealth is a real crime. I don't know that this applies to us simply because I don't know that we are able to see

Visions and revisions

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

SHEILA PAMCOS TERMED IN LAST WEEK and was as humble, to rest. The Filipino who gained worldwide renown for profligacy over and beyond the call of duty, or the capacity of her impoverished country to afford, epitomized above all by the collection of a couple of thousand pairs of shoes, which should fetch a fortune or so, when her husband, well, she used is "well-preserved," aided by good genes and a good amount of love—the latter being known to do a lesser job of preserving... she had man-aged to defy the ravages of age and distance, regarding the world with song and a head full of optimism that was positively inedible to the last, and we haven't seen the last.

The country's glamour, save there, many of them former Miss Universe officials and a many who no longer needed to hide their faces in shame but could throw themselves open to an avid public that was willing to look the opposite but had smashed to Double. A new generation had been born, most of whose members in the know or cared about material less, lionized an old generation ballroom to room that thought nothing of thought only good thoughts, of started too.

It wasn't only that many of Imelda's peers no longer needed to hide themselves in shame, it was that they would take on acts of being ridiculed. It was that they could say, "It was never in the bad in our time," and scream, with reason, real orange juice (where was no wine), and through the lens of romantic revisionism, the good of days.

"Most people," said our grandchild, "still think our grandmother is crazy or bad. If you only knew how maddening and loving and generous she is to her whole family and our country." You said? just more arrogant than that. It did not occur to them that the very humble size of the celebration, my proof of the pillage she had been indicted for by the courts, bail and hunger, but was found, be tucked pool, innocent of.

Then Imelda managed to save herself from the woman this country loved to dislike to—no that country is prepared to shake offers so small nuggets into our culture. Regardless

the crime as a crime. Of course, any forms of corruption in public, and condone it in the harshest terms. But we accept it in private, performing the same corrupt politicians to be the godfathers and godmothers of our children in baptisms and weddings in lieu of honest (and the) to (supposedly) school teachers.

Then we accept it in the same manner bestowed by the way the pillage is used than the pillage itself. Or by the personality of the pillagers rather than the pillage itself. You're Imelda, your contemporaries can be pinched to supplanting in the country. You're Erap, you are waived.

Finally, Imelda's rehabilitation, or laundering, gives you whole new insights into the real, or lessons of "personality politics." Well-to-be 21st century, we remain stained not. Otherwise call it a feudal culture, others a culture of personality, others a family-based culture. Whatever it is, it is a system or order where principles, conventions and historical judgments do not really matter or are easily circumvented. History itself may be rewritten to provide a different judgment. That is what Imelda's glamour era for it is a system where blood is thicker than water, friendship is more valuable than belief, being beholden is more binding than moral imperative. It is a society where personal connections, and not abstract rules, hold sway.

That is what makes it the hardest thing in the world Colaton said political parties. That is what makes it the hardest thing in the world for us to believe. That is what makes it the hardest thing in the world to contain opprobrium, particularly where its object is personable. That is why the reason why GMA will probably not enjoy Imelda's fate—for a not. Those who suffered previously during martial law will continue to recall how Imelda and her husband strung hapless souls across the country and tortured prisoners. Most others will not. They will only recall, along with David Letterman and Jay Leno, that she owned 50 more shoes than she could have worn.

So tonight the country will

Coup comeback

ANALYSIS

Armando Doronila

SINCE THE COLD WAR ENDED MORE THAN 20 years ago, there has been no successful coup in the Western world last month when the Honduran army handled President Manuel Zelaya from the presidential palace and sent him—in his pajamas—into forced exile in Costa Rica.

The coup surprised observers in Latin America who believed the region had entered a period in its tumultuous past of bloody US-backed coups. Condemning the coup, US President Barack Obama said, "I think it would be a terrible precedent if we start moving backwards into the era in which we are seeing military coups as a means of political transition rather than democratic elections." The public pushback coalesced on the edge of political instability and civil war, and reopened the Left-Right ideological cleavage in Latin America.

Roberto Micheletti, speaker of the National Congress, was named by the Congress as interim president, following the coup that was triggered by Zelaya's bid to hold a referendum seeking to amend the Constitution and extend his stay in office. What sparked the coup was Zelaya's refusal to comply with a Supreme Court ruling against his planned referendum on whether to hold a Constituent Assembly that would amend the Constitution. Zelaya's defiance is a historic first for our political families: it is dangerous to tinker with the Constitution to extend terms of office.)

Zelaya is a wealthy landlord, a member of the class that has dominated the Honduran power elite. His popularity was hovering at about 30 percent in the polls, according to reports, despite the negative popularity rating of our own President Macapagal-Arroyo, whose allies in the House of Representatives are pushing for the convening of Congress as a Constituent assembly to amend the Constitution, which critics believe is intended to extend her term which expires in June 2010.

Zelaya tried to return to Tegucigalpa, Honduras' capital last Sunday to reclaim the presidency, but coup leaders blocked the plane from landing. If the succeeds in returning, Zelaya faces arrest for 18 alleged criminal acts, including treason and failing to implement more than 80 laws approved by Congress since he took office in 2006. Zelaya also defied a Supreme Court ruling against his planned referendum on the ridge of political instability and civil war, and reopened the Left-Right ideological cleavage in Latin America.

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In his aircraft, hosted by "mini-me-his President Hugo Chavez, circled the capital in a fly by. Zelaya's supporters clashed with pro-government groups. Rows of soldiers and police in body armor were reported guarding the perimeter fence of the airport when demonstrators tried to take security around the runway. Dozens of riot police canisters were launched, and gunfire were reportedly coming from the terminal building. Two people were reported killed. Army trucks, their headlights blazing, had been lined up on the runway. The plane turned back and headed for Nicaragua.

(With Zelaya was 30 minutes away from the airport, he called for the army to obey his orders and, for the sake of the country, to allow his plane to land. The soldiers did not obey. That is the day per-sphere soldiers have option to obey or disobey a leader they have deposed.

Last Sunday, Zelaya won international support after his career. Jose several Latin America presidents, who had originally planned to accompany him, thought it was too danger-

ous a flight. The military soldiers drew international condemnation. The Organization of American States suspended Honduras on Saturday by refusing to reinstate Zelaya. The strongest shows yet by foreign governments to isolate Honduras. Without OAS membership, Honduras loses trade ministers that benefit the free trade of millions of dollars in subsidized oil, aid and loans.

Honduras relies heavily on exports, mainly bananas and coffee. A senior US administration official is reported to have expressed some frustration with Zelaya, saying he opposed allowing Chavez-US and other nations to press for the country's national hostage. Zelaya has another seven months to serve on his term.

Obama has condemned the coup, even as Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia and Nicaragua cut (and halted) Zelaya. According to the Financial Times, Zelaya joined the Chavez axis of the "21 century socialists" last year, and hoped to get access to concessionary Venezuelan oil. He was also accused by some Latin American leaders' ability to prolong their mandates by changing the constitution. In an editorial, the Financial Times said, "The Honduran army was right to refuse Zelaya's attempt to hold a vote that was illegal under the constitution."

Most of the criticisms about the coup centered on the military method of political change after 30 years of experience with brutal military dictatorships that ruled 13 of 20 republics in Latin America. The editorial commented: "Had Zelaya tried to use constitutional means of his term in office, he would have had a strong case. Instead, his attempt to rule by decree left him open to impeachment. What the army's overreaction has done is to weaken the institutions in a country and region where support for democracy is barely rooted, to give the Marxisting BB. Chavez another regional pulpit and to allow the unsavory Mr. Micheletti to pose as a democrat."

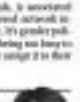
An easy way out and an election-driven extension of presidential term is both anathemas in the Philippines. Our idea of change is to elect a new president in May 2010.

Tita, Ate, Madam

IN THE PHILIPPINES, AS IN MANY OTHER COUNTRIES, the race of patients, at home or in hospitals, is associated with servants. There's a whole system centered around who is valued how, which includes visits to the sick. It's gender politics in the sense that men are themselves as being too busy to handle such "menial" matters, and therefore assign it to their subordinates, meaning the women.

Lately we've been seeing a new twist to all this, with hospitals instituting fee-earning highly-charged mini wars where power is being exercised and challenged. The main characters involved are very powerful women, mainly a former president Cory Aquino and the hacienda president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo), with the former Gov. Imelda Romualdez Marcos, trying to get a bit of the limelight.

PINOY KASI



Michael L. Tan

The power play hasn't been too dramatic but the events do reflect on many aspects of Philippine politics and society, with a fascinating confluence of gender politics and the national question.

Let me start with a quick summary of what has been happening in the past few months.

I'll start with former President Cory Aquino, who has been battling colon cancer which has taken her in and out of hospitals. Reflecting her personality, she has tried to be low key and very private about her illness but has drawn gross public sympathy, including, right now with her latest hospitalization, a series of healing Masses that are well attended.

Suddenly, visits to the hospital, or attending the Mass, becomes a way of identifying not just concern for Cory but also one's position, pro- or anti-administration. Newspaper pics noted, on the front page, a visit from Susan Roces, widow of Fernando Poe Jr. Some papers noted, too, Imelda's claim that she had been praying for Cory.

Despite her illness, Cory has continued to speak out on national issues, including, in her latest hospital confinement, that concerning the Cory site.

Let's look into it at GMA, who was also hospitalized but still-great recovery. News leaked out, including reports that one reason for her hospitalization was to repair, well, a leakage of a breast implant. The irreverent press has pounced on this news item, wondering why she had the breast implant in the first place. Presidential spokespersons at first denied the rumors, then confirmed that there had been an implant and, rather defensively, said that the implant, now being removed, was one of her own small breasts as a "fresh job," was the medical excuse.

I should let be very clear in saying that I believe it's a waste an sight to decide whether she wants breast implants or not. Some time back, I wrote about how Philhealth tries to distinguish "medical" and "cosmetic" procedures, classifying the latter as not reimbursable. In the real world though, the distinction can be quite blurry, as when a woman has breast surgery for cancer, for example, may ask for an implant and will get Philhealth coverage because the implant is justified by a "medical" reason. Yet we know too the procedure is still "cosmetic" and, be want of a better term, "vanity" does come into the picture.

That was a long way of saying we should be less judgmental about women who have breast implants. I actively support the idea that GMA's breast implant, surgical or plausible as it might seem, Cory Aquino, the public would probably have been more sympathetic. The gossip around GMA's leakage, unfortunately, reflects her unpopularity. Sure, too, that there hasn't been, as far as I know, any intention to organize healing Masses for GMA.

What has happened then is that the hospitalizations and health problems of Cory and GMA have become immersed in the politicking of machine plays, where opinions about either's good and bad points (or implants) are thinly disguised commentaries about persons.

Three monthly plays are not enacted from scripts drawn out of nowhere like telenovelas. Instead, the storyline plays build on social and political realities, including the personalities of some of our most powerful women.

Archetypes

In the last year, I've been working on drawing up "archetypes" of the Filipina. I've come to know that there are different types of "machismo" in the Philippines, drawing from different aspects of our history. The Cory-GMA medical drama has reminded me that there is no single "Pinay" archetype either.

I'm only going to give a very brief and preliminary description of three archetypes. First, there's the Tita Cory archetype, over gracious and compassionate, with a strong sense of family, especially the extended family, which should help the poor, sometimes in an almost patronizing way. The Tita Cory's income lines are well loved, the ones who visit the sick and who are visited when they are sick.

GMA on the other hand is more of the sister Ate (that, the Glo), disciplinarian to the point of being harsh. They are detached, almost unfeeling, and have a strong sense of superiority. Their response to a crisis is usually, "I know I'm right so don't challenge me, or you're going to get hurt."

The Ate Glo's of our lives put up a façade of invincibility, ever fearful about showing some humanity which might be interpreted as weakness. Thus the defensiveness on GMA's part over being hospitalized, and especially over the breast implants. ("What, me vain?").

While the Ate Glos of our lives may have the best intentions ("I know what's best for you"), they put the dole-bring afraid. Often, they are the ones on the receiving of a sense of obligation—sometimes with tongues wagging after the visit.

I can't help but comment on an Imelda archetype, for whom life is one big continuing performance, with the Imelda as director, producer and leading actress. Think of how family would have handled her hospitalizations. There would have been periodic bulletins, and I don't think she would have tried to hide the reasons, including an implant, which she would have remembered into a measure for the true, good and beautiful. She, too, would have organized healing Masses, making sure they would be well-attended.

Is it possible that our feelings about our women leaders are shaped in part by our own experiences with the Tita Corys, Ate Glos and Madam Imeldas in our own families?

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The cover-up, not the confinement

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

WHAT GOT RICHARD NIXON IN THE COOLER of the Watergate investigation was not the break-in itself—which was but a misdemeanor—but the cover-up he and his aide in the end turned in the White House itself.

And so it is with President GMA's recent hospitalization at the Asian Hospital. The issue is not so much the President's illness and what procedures she did or did not undergo, but the subterfuge that gained by Malacañang, apparently with her consent.

As we all know by now, the Palace information machinery put out the news that its "complainer" with gradations issued by the Department of Health, the attending individuals gathered in the sunroom from yesterday when the ACTING virus was present. He denies was going on quarantine in the Asian hospital upon her arrival from a South American trip. Only after the President had been quarantine for the President was no longer necessary since a "community outbreak" of the new virus had already taken place.

From what I gather, most of the popular speculation has to do with the cover-up. What is, in of your columnist Jarius Bondoc broke the news that GMA was lying to his people. Using author-native sources, Bondoc revealed that the President was not confined due to the ACTING virus, but rather for the cosmetic surgery repair of leak-ing breast implants done in the '90s.

The subsequent press conference and statements given by Press Secretary Cerge Remonde were an interesting case study for students of communications and public relations. Remonde's every-day dubbing expressions on Bernardo's face as he struggled to explain the discrepancy confirmed by his office, and then to clarify the President's health status, was extremely entertaining.

Remonde's statement that it would be caught out on a lie, but so offered at the same time not lose the citizenry but also the country's community of markets, economic surgeons and large-breasted women—while at without the aid of modern science—is a testament to the value of public relations bumbling.

* * *

IT'S instructive how, when faced with a delicate

situation, Malacañang's instinct is to dissemble and deceive.

I don't think the public would have taken it against the President if it had been revealed that she had undergone a breast operation more than 10 years ago that necessitated the use of implants and which now needed to be repaired.

Not all Filipinos harbor anti-cosmetic surgery sentiments, or to enhance what the Good Lord has seen fit to give a woman. Going by Remonde's latter explanation, GMA underwent a biopsy or biopsies on her breast, and the implants were removed to give her breasts a more even appearance, to Remonde implied, the procedure was certainly not done to "enhance" her appearance since she doesn't seem any more endowed than the average Filipina. (Didn't know if GMA appreciated the backhanded compliment calling attention to the size of her breasts.)

Why all the secrecy surrounding the confinement? And why use the excuse of the threat of an ACTING infection to cover up a relatively simple procedure? It would be far better if the public to be discussing her breasts (or groin, since a biopsy was also allegedly conducted there).

Actually, the President's information machinery could have devoted a few of its days to the public the truth without necessarily revealing personal and intimate details. They could simply have said, "The President will be confined at the Asian Hospital for a few days to undergo a minor procedure that is not life-threatening. She prefers to keep the details private."

* * *

IS PHILIPPINE history the most notable example

of a leader who kept his health status secret from the public way Ferdinand Marcos, who was in obvious about keeping under wraps news of his kidney ailment for years. Marcos preferred to be lionized by amateurs, or at fulfilled hero.

During the many obvious campaign towards the end of his reign, Marcos's aides having donned a Woody shows—being a ruffle it was widely believed that he was suffering from kidney failure. Marcos died that he needed for regular dialysis. But when asked about it, Marcos dismissed the claim as a spill from "unreputable" that he had been drinking.

It was a puzzling remark, because the red-colored urine was indeed a symptom of kidney failure. Marcos' youth, who accompanied him to Hawaii, with no longer available in 1985.

Only after their exiles from Malacañang, when the public was allowed to tour the Marcoses' private quarters, were Filipinos able to confirm the rumors that Imelda Marcos had indeed been a kidney donor to her husband.

(PRESIDENTS are human, after all, with their own share of physical frailties, inaccuracies and delusions. It's when a leader buys into his own propaganda of being superhuman and infallible that the public is handed a candidate that he cannot be entirely free hardships and misrule.

Only the most hard-hearted would begrudge the President some time off for a check-up, a procedure, or just to rest. President GMA has done an honest attempt to serve and lead out of living in those of others their age. And as a post-menopausal woman, GMA would be subject to any numbers of ailments and conditions, all of which require medical attention.

In fact, I wish GMA had been as candid be more upfront about her health condition. As President she is in a position to take a public platform about the health issues that elderly women face, from menopause to gynecological concerns, to those consequences to prolonged vulnerability to breast attack. It still isn't too late. And if she speaks out, everyone has to believe her.

Foreman's guide to Philippine travel

LOOKING BACK

Anthony E. Cuaresma

THERE IS A RIDICULOUS PROPOSAL TO RE-dust the toll on the South Luzon Expressway or SLEX by 50 percent because of heavy traffic. Motorists who have to endure the never-ending construction on the road complain that the present "expressway" may as well be called a "slow way" to somewhere downtown mall. But our attention whom all these short-sighted proposals are coming from. If you believe the toll, then the roads will not be built and there we are in for even longer delays.

That reminds me of a story I wrote in 1994. It seems to remember when the North Luzon Expressway or NLEX was deemed paid for and toll was not collected. The result deteriorated very fast. There a new group took over and gave us world-class roads. Motorists were willing to pay for the privilege the increase in toll fees when they could very well have taken the old MacArthur Highway for free if they wished. We are such a hard lot to please, and this always makes me wonder why some people even oppose toll collection.

To keep from causing trouble on the road, I took to paying the money while driving. It was a wonderful but short-lived exercise because it didn't seem appropriate to pay on the road. I am also not a very patient driver, and the traffic, watching people excavating their mouths as they wait for the refunds ahead of them in store a bit.

I appreciated our roads and expressways as I went through the travel itineraries and suggestions of John Foreman in the second volume of his encyclopedic edition of his book "The Philippine Islands: A political, geographical, ethnographical, social and commercial history of the Philippine Archipelago and the political dependencies of Spain during the whole period of Spanish rule." Originally published in London in 1899, it describes the Philippine territories three lines, from the yellow and red of Spain to our own red, white, blue, and three stars. Foreman gives the times and fatigues of the formal frames of America.

Foreman wrote a lot about his travels around the country, noting everything he saw and experienced. In chapter 21, he provided a number of itineraries for various trips around the country, detailing the mode of transport, estimated time of travel between points, and what to see and do there or do. It three day trip around Manila meant traveling by carriage from Manila to Malapitan, which had a scenery that was worth the trip and worse excellent for bathing. There was a lot of places still to be found today, he said.

Foreman knew that Bataan used to be a Jesuit retreat called Jesus de la Peña. From there one traveled to San Mateo and/or to Montalban by carromata and then took a banca three hours up the river to this scenery at the end was spectacular, as he also pleasing. He advised a visit to the to many giants known as La Cueva and, of course, you had to see the marble boulders as you rode over the highlands.

From Montalban to Guadalupe, you traveled on a pony then transferred to a carromata for the ride to Jesus de la Peña. Foreman also mentioned Montalban by carromata and then took a banca three hours up the river to this scenery at the end was spectacular, as he also pleasing. He advised a visit to the to many giants known as La Cueva and, of course, you had to see the marble boulders as you rode over the highlands.

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Time and distances were the same then as now. The trip from Manila to Pasig took one and a half hours by carromata and the Pasig River during wet days. It probably takes the same time by Metrobank today, and longer if you travel by land during rush hour.

Manila to Laguna, Batangas, one let done in one hour by land and 30 by sea and the good riverine road that avoids all those crowded little towns, like San Fernando and Bacoor in Cavite—unless, you traveled to Laguna from Manila by steamer, which took six hours. Laguna today gets easily flooded, in case great parts were called over and its access badly over with no regard to the natural ebb-and-flow of the river.

Batangas was described as "a very dreary, uninteresting town." From Manila to Manila, the distance was 216 miles and travel took about 27 hours by steamer. The round trip from Manila to Batangas must have been 36 hours.

If you go through Foreman's travel guide, you will appreciate how far we have come today.

Foreman described the people of Luzon as generally affable and hospitable. "Those from Bigan and Iloilo were less courteous, while those from Cebu were docile and willing. He raised this in connection with the question of providing food for the journey. "Travelers cannot provide enough for the way, you found good bread along the way, you should always take some extra supply on the journey because some places did not have bread or bakeries. He said the best bread outside Manila could be found in Malolos, Bulacan.

There as now luggage had to be limited. One didn't need an outsized dressmaker but a compact one always useful. While riding on a pony in the rain, he said it was best to wear a mackintosh and the neck like a scarf. He also advised travelers to hire suchtas a servant along: "Tuscan boys are the best—Pampa boys are the worst."

In the investigation to his book Foreman wears a white summer coat and pants, white boots and a hat, and holds a whip. Dressed to from of the man in the traveling servant, hostess and find only wine lubbed white shoes.

Now that we can travel in air-conditioned buses or drive our own roomy through roads and so on, I look back on adventurous travelers like Foreman who came to our shores and wrote about their experiences, leaving us with a guide book that is now a historical source for the Philippines a century ago. My favorite is still Antonio Pigafetta and the early travelers' accounts of the Philippines with Filipino travel accounts of Europe and the United States.

Comments are welcome at cuaresma@inquirer.com.ph

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LETTERS

Lessons from Sweden, Finland on what to export

SIDNEY EMERY'S EXCELLENT COLUMN "Seeing like a nation" (Inquirer, 7/4/05) sets spot on. The last paragraph sums it up eminently:

"...Any enrollment we have sacrificed our sources of strength—our formative institutions—at the altar of a heedless economic model based on the export of people. Instead of harnessing their talent and creativity to develop our country and ransom our way of life, we literally drive our people away to serve other societies."

Sweden after World War II was in a somewhat similar situation: a nation with few people, sheer statement, and a language that only its people spoke. Somehow its people found faith in their own basic talent and goodness and reinvented themselves as a country. In today's parlance, they export core and other quality technical products. They even have IKEA, which is a furniture company with a difference—they build it, you put it together. Sweden never had to export its people for the sake of their remittances. People came first, the economy follows.

Finland doesn't have many exports, but everyone wants a Nokia, it seems. By the way, in Finland, everyone's tax return details is a matter of public knowledge, available online. How many other countries would be so open and trusting?

The Philippines has its people as its richest source of talent and strength. One day soon, its economic navigators will have to learn how to put the right to work in power: the right to work first, go.

The GMA is share at least the same line as Macapagal-Arroyo and her cohorts, then Fil-Ipinos will really be a happy lot. It is also the prospect of this type of inculturation that is pushing the Aquino administration to move heaven and hell so that it will not be extricated from power.

But come to think of it, the Aquino administration has done worse crimes than Madoff, and GMA deserves to rot in prison for all eternity. Her only true misstep stolen from the Filipino people through the various scams like jueteng removed like the P728-million lotto draw scam, she also created the worker, misery and disappearance of thousands of her citizens. GMA is also the one primary responsible for the current sorry state of our nation's economy due to her neo-liberal policies; she is engaged in selling Philippine patrimony and is trying to keep herself in power "through right here, through left there" go.

The GMA is share at least the same line as Madoff, then we must do our part in being more vigilant and active against all her attempts to conspire with the Constitution, to sabotage or cancel the elections, and to declare martial rule. Let us not allow her clever skills in filling the appropriate charges against her and support those with institutionalist. Justice can only be attained through hard work, and our action is still the best to our country's future.

—NICOLE LOPEZ
public information officer
Bayang Magsasaka Mahalaga sa Diyos
(Bayan Bilad)
Banaue 17, Legaspi City, Albay

Abducted Fil-Am should have filed case instead of holding press con

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS in the Philippines have been a subject of concern and controversy. Although the government generally respects human rights, alleged violations thereof continue to be reported. Unresolved cases, torture, violence against women and abuse of children remain serious problems, and some children have been pressed into slave labor and sexual abuse.

The Philippine government, particularly the Armed Forces of the Philippines, is now under fire after a Fil-Am activist, Melissa Roxas, accused the military of abducting her. But many expressed doubts about her sincerity because she opted to hold a press conference instead of bringing the case to the proper forum. If only she were threatened, then why doesn't she file a case so that the perpetrators could suffer the consequences of their acts. What she is doing, it seems to me, is to get the sympathy of the public through the media.

As a citizen of this country I am too fond of this kind of publicity and I think it is time for us to unite and come together for my country's progress and improvement—for everybody's sake.

—LETHA LUCIDO,
Barrio Luna@yahoo.com

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Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Bernard Madoff

THIS IS A REACTION TO "THE NEWS ARTICLE "Bernard Madoff gets 150 years in prison for 'unprecedented' fraud" (Inquirer, 7/1/2009). If only this type of justice can be meted against Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and her cohorts, then Fil-Ipinos will really be a happy lot. It is also the prospect of this type of retribution that is pushing the Aquino administration to move heaven and hell so that it will not be extricated from power.

But come to think of it, the Aquino administration has done worse crimes than Madoff, and GMA deserves to rot in prison for all eternity. Her only true misstep stolen from the Filipino people through the various scams like jueteng removed like the P728-million lotto draw scam, she also created the worker, misery and disappearance of thousands of her citizens. GMA is also the one primary responsible for the current sorry state of our nation's economy due to her neo-liberal policies; she is engaged in selling Philippine patrimony and is trying to keep herself in power "through right here, through left there" go.

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(Bayan Bilad)
Banaue 17, Legaspi City, Albay

Gaite is Courage's legitimate chief—affiliates

THIS IS A RESPONSE TO HEA COLORES' GETwe which claimed that Ferdinand Gaite could not legitimately lead the Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (Courage), a national organization of government employees (Inquirer, 6/18/09). As affiliate unions of Courage, we find that we have to clear up matters here.

Firstly, Colores does not have the right to question the legitimacy of Gaite as Courage's national president, unless the part of the organization. Which we doubt since she did not specify her affiliation in her letter. But by her enlightenment, Batas mas legitimately elected to that position during the national congress of Courage in December 2008.

And where could Colores have gotten the idea that Gaite was reportedly distressed by Courage when not a single complaint against the latter has ever been formally submitted to the general assembly or the national secretariat? In fact, Courage affiliates have repeatedly observed how Gaite has been consistently active in the general assembly or the national secretariat. In fact, Courage affiliates have repeatedly observed how Gaite has been consistently active in the general assembly or the national secretariat.

The allegation that Gaite could not represent a sector is completely baseless. For Colores' information, Gaite was a public servant himself he served two decades. He was the Division chief of the Management Information System of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration before he resigned from government service in 2005.

His expertise on the field of public sector issues were recognized by the International Oversight Committee on Labor and Employment (IOCLE) which, through the office of the late Sen. Crispin Beltran, invited Gaite as consultant. His membership did not end with his resignation from OWWA. Like any civil servants, he has all the right to criticize the wanton acts of GMA if he feels that its funds are being misappropriated or mismanaged.

Courage's constitution and by-laws accommodates former government employees who have dedicated their time and effort to fighting for the interests of their sector and of the Filipino people in honorary member) with the same rights as members in active service. Gaite therefore qualifies, provided he is not a fully paid officer in left OWWA to devote his time fully to serving his fellow government employees.

Lastly, it is shocking to hear Colores mauling Dimdim Lalaco and others for protecting the interests of GSIS members who have suffered or stand to because of the mismanagement of GSIS' general manager Winston Garcia and top officials. The complaints against the GSIS management did not come out of nowhere; it stemmed from the misuse of cases of misposting of contributions and payments of bond issues and questionable GSIS investments, to cite a few. The way Colores defends the GSIS top officials, it would seem that she is benefiting from the mismanagement in the agency, and yet it is not even clear to her letter of her as a GSIS member or pensioner.

—SANTIAGO SOMMERFIAS III,
secretary general, Courage
HILARIO UY, vice president, NDEA-Courage
ROSE BARCHETE, president, GUNARL-Courage
ELISEA PRUDENCIO, president, BOLETI-Courage
JOSELI OSIO, president, Sandigan Courage
DENNIS ANTIA, president, Recondor IC-Courage
ROMARIO BERGES, president, ALL of PERA-Courage
ALEXANDER FRANCE, president, Lyceo-Courage

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Cory legacy: Pushing Cordillera autonomy

By Maureen Malanon
Baguio City

OVER A RECENT LOCAL RADIO program on indigenous peoples' concerns, Erlinda Tindin of the Baguio Diocese's Social Action Center asked other Igorot people to help pray for the recovery of former President Corazon Aquino.

Aquino, 77, who has been battling colon cancer since 2008, should be credited for having helped mainstream the cause of autonomy for the Cordillera, says Tindin, an Ifugao from Tadang Benguet.

Tindin was right. Before Aquino was swept to the presidency by a civilian-backed military revolt in February 1986, the concern and debate over autonomy for the Cordillera and for Muslim Mindanao were confined among activists, who helped battle the martial rule imposed by strongman Ferdinand Marcos.

Under Marcos, people who advocated autonomy or self-rule were among those considered threats to national security. Many sons and daughters of the Cordillera, for example, were forced to go underground as they were treated by soldiers as antigovernment for espousing self-rule for the upland region.

Democratic space

One of the more prominent Cordilleras was the late Tinggian priest Conrado Balweg, who, after exhausting all legal means but failing to help stop the operations of a Marcos crony-owned paper mill, was forced to join the New People's Army.

But Balweg, a Cordillera autonomy advocate, broke away from his comrades, formed his own liberation army, and made peace with the Aquino administration, which provided a "democratic space" that paved the way for the free discussion of autonomy.

After Balweg and Aquino forged a peace pact in September, 1986, at Mount Data in Mt. Province, Aquino issued Executive Order 220, which created the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR).

Through EO 220, the Cordillera provinces were grouped into an administrative region. Under Marcos, Benguet, Mt. Province and Abra became part of Region I (Ilocos), while Ifugao, Kalinga and Apayao belonged to Region 2 (Cagayan Valley).

"In autonomy activists, the citizens of the Cordillera use Marcos' 'divide-and-rule' tactic over the upland region, which was rich in timber, minerals and energy resources.

EO 220 also created other interim bodies, such as the Cordillera Regional Assembly (CRA) and the Cordillera Executive Board (CEB), which were envisioned to help prepare the grounds for an autonomous region.

Through EO 220, many Cordillera governors, provincial and municipals, including those who never raised a voice on autonomy under the Marcos dictatorship, found themselves in juicy positions in line agencies created under the CAR setup. Some traditional politicians also found their way to these coveted agencies.

Organic act

Moreover, peoples' organizations from the Cordillera and Mindanao lobbied for the cause of autonomy to be integrated in the 1987 Constitution. They succeeded in convincing the drafters to incorporate in the Charter the right of indigenous peoples to govern their region and use their resources for their own development based on customary laws and traditions.

But the constitutional provision needed an enabling law, which would detail the mechanisms for self-rule. Under Aquino, the Cordillera Regional Consultative Commission was formed to draft an organic act or a proposed law for self-rule.

The region selected its best intelligence experts, backed by autonomy activists, to draft the proposed law. Through their community-based peoples' organization networks, the drafters consulted communities and produced an organic act, which many hailed as an ideal draft as it could pave the way to reverse a long history of state neglect and underdevelopment.

But the drafters complained that Congress mangled the organic act, subjecting everything...including the right of the Cordillera people to use their resources according to their customary laws—to national laws and "national interests."

The late human rights lawyer Arthur Galace, who helped draft the organic act, said the document was "so mangled beyond recognition" that he campaigned for its rejection when it was subjected to a plebiscite in 1990.

Autonomy advocates from different sperctums, including Balweg and other peoples' organizations, which helped support the organic act drafting, also campaigned for its rejection. As a result, only Ifugao voted for the proposed law.

The autonomy issues was revived under President Fidel Ramos and another law was drafted and presented in a plebiscite in 1998. This time, only Ifugao voted for it.

With the experiences from the two plebiscites, officials now led by National Economic and Development Authority Cordillera Director Jesus Ngalob are saying that more information and education campaign are needed before Cordillerans can appreciate the path of self-rule.

For Ngalob, self-rule has co-ignorable because it may not be achieved even under his lifetime. What is important, he says, is that the concerns for autonomy is being debated and is being discussed even in classrooms.

More info and education campaign are needed before Cordillerans can appreciate the path of self-rule for the upland region

Across the NATION

4-yr-old boy rescued from Pentagon

COTABATO CITY—Police on Monday rescued a 4-year-old scion of a Maguindanao Filipino-Chinese trader from the hands of the Pentagon kidnap gang that held the boy for 12 days.

Supt. Elmido Dimaya, spokesperson of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao police office, said yesterday that the boy was recovered about 11:30 p.m. in Barangay Tankalan in Datu Odin Sinsuat, one of seven municipalities of town in Maguindanao.

Dimaya said operatives of the police 105th Provincial Mobile Group went to Tankalan after receiving a tip from residents about the presence of five gunmen there.

He said the troopers fired warning shots near the policemen and followed near the victim.

"Our operatives found the boy outside the road side," Dimaya said.

Healthy

Insp. Aubert Golden, chief of the police team in the operations, said the boy was in good health but appeared to have lost weight.

"He was clear and has been examined medically already at about 3 a.m. Tuesday," Golden said.

The victim was seized just outside a preschool here as he was on his way home with his nanny on June 25.

He was moved into a waiting Kia car and brought to the nearby district of Tee city.

Police operatives nabbed two suspects while the alleged leader, Abdulazzar Abo, had escaped. Both were identified by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front as have being investigated.

Eid Kabalu, MILF civil-military affairs chief, said the case is another of a smoking rebel leader.

He said the MILF took him into custody so he could be investigated by his detained activities, which did not jibe the ceasefire agreement.

MILF clothes

Police said their dealing a raid on Abo's house here, they recovered combat uniforms with MILF insignias on them.

Sultan Mastura Dimaporo, city police chief, said the abductors were members of the third group Kidnapfor-ransom gang who were linked to previous kidnappings in the city and nearby areas.

Mayor Macabanse Sinsuat said the kidnappers demanded P35 million in exchange for the release of boy.

But Bisuat said no ransom fee has been paid and the child was recovered.

The Pentagon gang was founded in the 1980s by Moro National Liberation Front leader Habier Malik Sinsuat.

It silent in operations in the 1990s because of its abduction of mostly foreign businessmen.

In January this year, the Pentagon seized Cotabato Filipino-Chinese trader Wilson Tieu and his 10-year-old daughter. Her mother later released after the family paid an undisclosed ransom to Pentagon.

A month later, the group kidnapped Hakim Wu, a maintaining Chinese national, in Sultan Mastly Gandam. He was freed five days later in Maguindanao.

On May 31, Pentagon kidnapped rich Lourdes Kim Tee, cashier of Datu Sinsuat cockpit arena. She was brought to Datu Odin Sinsuat with her driver Indra Sumatra and freed after the family paid an undisclosed amount of ransom.

Also in May, Filipino-Chinese Christopher Ong, a new used-cars dealer, was kidnapped in Barangay Bulakin, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao.

He was freed in Sultan Kudarat town. Edwin G. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao

LIFE ON THE RUN

Amina Ibrahim's life is one of constant fear and flight. Fear of getting caught in the crossfire in the war for a separate Islamic state in Mindanao propelled her and her family often—at the run. She now stays in an evacuation center that the rest of the homeless displaced by the war area call home.

EDWIN G. FERNANDEZ

1,000 ex-Napocor workers jobless in Transco setup

BACOLOD CITY—AT LEAST 1,000 former employees of a state power firm failed to qualify for work at the National Grid Corp. of the Philippines, which acquired the country's power transmission grid, a former union leader of the National Transmission Corp. (Transco) said.

Ritchie Revellar, Negros Luzon chapter president of the Mindanao Transco Employees Union (Matrieu), said they were advised about the decision only last week. Revellar was among those who failed to meet NGCP standards.

Formerly the corporations of Mirant Gen. Gold Resources Corp. (MGGRC), Sunt. Grid Corp. of Cebu (SGCC) and Cabaca High Power Corp., the NGCP promised to absorb all 5,000 Transco workers when it won the 25-year concession contract to maintain all of the country's power transmission lines, Revellar said.

He said most of Visayas Transco employees were astonished when the National Power Corp. were broken up into Transco and several power firms companies.

The sale of Transco, the generation companies and distribution of Napocor are part of the industry deregulation required by the 2001 Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA).

Revellar said some of the Transco employees who lost their jobs have not reached retirement age but would have difficulty finding new jobs because most of them are old.

"There are many employees who are very young. They would have had a good source [of PHGDF," he said.

Several union leaders like him also failed to make the grade, Revellar said.

"But we cannot go to [the Department of Labor and Employment] to complain because the national grid was [sectioned off] unfavorably to a new company," he said.

The union had protested the privatization of the Transco grid, saying it could impose an increase on security.

Toward the end of 2008, the union members started negotiating for access to the transition refund to NGCP's takeover in January, but they were only informed of his plan once the new firm started developing its manpower pool, Revellar said. Marianne Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Guimaras asks court to spare it from order on boat travel

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE GOVERNMENT of Guimaras asked a court there to stop the enforcement of a Coast Guard rule that automatically bans boats from sailing out to sea to ensure safety because Signal No. 1, saying it was hurting the province's tourism and other businesses.

In an eight-page petition filed July 6 at the Regional Trial Court in Iloilo, Guimaras, the province, the government, represented by Gov. Felipe Nava, and the provincial deputies of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, represented by lawyer Jobo Edward Grande, sought the issuance of a temporary restraining order against Coast Guard Memorandum Circular No. 03-09 and the eventual nullification of the order.

The memorandum, issued by Coast Guard Commandant Vice Admiral Wilfredo Tamayo on Feb. 5, 2009, unnecessarily prohibits vessels weighing 3,000 gross tons or less from sailing if Storm Signal No. 1 was raised in the vessels' point of origin, route or destination.

Costly lessons

The measure was among those enforced by the Coast Guard after the sinking in Princess Tenpaw of passenger vessels, including the M/V Princess of the Stars and several other cargo vessels and fishing boats, at the height of Typhoon Frank last year.

In a phone interview on Sunday, Capt. Eduardo Rubenecia, Iloilo Coast Guard commander, said the Coast Guard has not received a copy of the petition. He said the Coast Guard legal office in Manila would respond to the case because it was a national policy matter.

The petitioners deplored the Coast Guard policy of "unreasonable and unnecessary" in the case of Guimaras.

The petitioners said the order should not be applied to fast boats plying Guimaras and Iloilo because the boats cover only a very short distance, about 25m, that could be reached in 10-15 minutes.

No danger

They said the danger "varies depending on the distance and travel time from the point of origin to point of destination."

"Thus, a vessel traveling en route with two to more hours of travel time are substantially different from routes with a 15-minute travel time," the petitioners said.

The petitioners said the directive to suspend operations of vessels plying Guimaras and Iloilo is discretionary on the direction of the Coast Guard commander in the area.

They said in many cases, including during the recent Typhoon Feria, thousands of residents of Guimaras and Iloilo were stranded in ports because boat operations were indiscriminately suspended, but the weather was calm.

The continued enforcement of the policy on Guimaras ferry boats has harmed the province's tourism industry, businesses and impeded travel of residents and employees in the area, according to the petitioners.

Ferry boats are the only means of public transportation coming from and going to the island, which has about 94,000 residents.

Quezon mayors raise alarm over illegal guns

LUCENA CITY—A GROUP OF mayors in Quezon expressed alarm at the proliferation of unlicensed firearms in the province and asked the Philippine National Police to step up its campaign to recover firearms after the group said were mostly in the hands of criminals.

"The situation is now alarming," said Mayor Ibrahim Tan of San Francisco, Quezon, head of the Quezon Mayors' League.

"There are lots of unlicensed guns around," he said.

Quoting other mayors in the league, he said many known criminals in the province are now armed.

"Why are they now armed? Who gave them guns?" Tan said.

He cited the arrest in his town of a bodyguard of the town's vice mayor who was found carrying an unlicensed gun.

PNP Chief Director, of the San Francisco police, arrested Elmer Pergalbino, a bodyguard of Vice Mayor Amadeo Abiga, last July 4 for possession of an unlicensed .45 cal. pistol.

Pergalbino was charged with illegal possession of firearms.

Senior Supt. Elmo Francis Saavedra, Quezon police chief, said police have already intensified the campaign against loose firearms.

"When it comes to politicians, I already warned them not to resort to harming private citizens," he said in a phone interview.

Saavedra disputed Tan's statement, saying the number of unlicensed guns in Quezon has not increased alarming proportion.

Last week, Batocael Bayan of Investigation squad and the Lucena City police raided the house of two fishing magnates in Barangay Dalahican, and seized a total of 13 unlicensed guns and ammunition.

Also last week, a public school teacher in Buenavista town was shot dead inside his house.

On Monday, three motorcycle riders were shot dead in Candelaria town, two hours before, a village chieftain from the same town was also gunned down.

The city before, a Lucena radio broadcaster was attacked by a gunman inside his home in Sariaya town. The broadcaster survived.

According to PNP estimates, at least 1.1 million unlicensed guns are out in the streets, most of them in the hands of ex-rebels and are being used for crimes.

PNP Director General Jesus Verzosa has proposed tighter gun controls in the run-up to the 2010 elections. Julito C. Medilo Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

PROTESTERS carry gun replicas as a rally in front of the Commission on Elections office in Manila to demand a stop to fraud and violence during elections.

BIODIESEL Premium MORE POWER. MORE MILEAGE. LESS SMOKE. FLYING V

Republican lawmaker chides media over MJ coverage: He's a low-life

LOS ANGELES—LEGAL MEnewsmongers over Michael Jackson's wealth and reminders of his extravagance and wonderful life marked even the eve of his funeral.

His mother Katherine on Monday lost a bid to control his enormous but tangled estate, while a New York congressman branded Jackson a "pervert" unworthy of so much attention.

Republican Rep. Peter King referred a YouTube video calling Jackson, who was acquitted of child molestation charges in 2005, a "pervert" and a "low-life."

"I really think the media has disgraced itself; I think that too many people in public life have made fools of themselves by talking about Michael Jackson as if he was some kind of hero," King said.

"Let's knock out the psychobabble. This guy was a pervert, he was a child molester, he was a pedophile," he added.

"He died, he had some talent, he had an apparent cardiac arrest at age 50. "He brought people together, helped expose something that's vile to all."

From Tokyo to Melbourne, Asian fans yesterday braced for a late night in solidarity with the thousands scrambling for Los Angeles movie tickets.

In the Philippines, the country's largest running television variety show, "Eat Bulaga," will hold a Michael Jackson dancing contest on Wednesday in honor of the pop icon, organizers said.

In Australia, the memorial will be broadcast live on a giant screen in the southern city of Melbourne at 3 a.m. local time. Several Australian TV stations will also carry the event live.

In Hong Kong, a suburban mall will run its TV screens on the event at 11 a.m. as part of a celebration featuring performances of Jackson's signature "moonwalk" and a running broadcast of his videos.

Even in Burma

At another Hong Kong mall, Taiwanese newcomer Judy Chou was to perform Jackson classics as Hong Kong and Chinese fans lay flowers as a wax statue of the singer on loan from the local Madame Tussauds museum.

In Buenos Aires, Mayerin, 34, pan-old actress and songstress Hanel Andrade said he wants to search the memorial as closure.

"It gives a sense of OK, now he's no longer here," he said. "He's one of my biggest influences in becoming an artist."

Even in the reclusive, military-controlled Burma (Myanmar), a dance group held a memorial service for Jackson as nearly 200 fans held a candlelight vigil in a Rangoon (Yangon) park last week, the local Weekly Eleven News journal reported.

"Michael Jackson is my teacher. I learned dancing by watching Michael Jackson's movements. I am profoundly saddened by his death," said dancer Moe Min Htun, who arranged the service during his regular show at the Happy World karaoke dance park.

Liz, Debbie keep it private

But new of Jackson's closest friends, Elizabeth Taylor, will be mourning in private. She said on her Twitter feed on Monday that she would not attend the memorial.

"I just don't believe that Michael would want me to share my grief with millions of others," she tweeted. "How I feel is between us. Not a public event."

Debbie Rowe, Jackson's ex-wife and the mother of Jackson's two oldest children, had planned to attend the memorial but backed out on Monday.

"The onslaught of media attention has made it clear her attendance would be so unnecessary distraction to an event that should focus exclusively on Michael's legacy," her attorney Maria Abril said in a statement.

"Debbie will continue to celebrate Michael's memory privately," Abril said.

Chaos among ticketless

An additional 1,400 police officers will be on duty in Los Angeles to provide security, while city blocks surrounding the venue have been sealed off.

Organizers have appealed to ticketless fans to watch the memorial on television, fearing chaos if hundreds of thousands take to the streets to mourn.

A live feed of the service to bring mass available free to television networks, while the event will also be streamed via social networking websites Facebook and MySpace, officials said. Reports from AP and AFP

Jackson tribute could be biggest celebrity send-off of all time

From page A1

CHEERS!! The Staples Center has a 20,000-seating capacity, about 8,750 of which were rallied to memorial Michael Jackson. Fans from around the world will be allowed in the venue in the wee hours of Wednesday, Manila time. JOSE CARLOS CRUZ

"Michael Jackson is my teacher. I learned dancing by watching Michael Jackson's movements. I am profoundly saddened by his death," said dancer Moe Min Htun, who arranged the service during his regular show at the Happy World karaoke dance park.

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Fil-Ams caught in frenzy; circus comes to town

From page A1

ceremony and then eulogized in a huge memorial service Sunday morning at the Staples Center.

Marlin "Lily" Patricio Kirkhoff, originally from Tayug, Pangasinan, was overwhelmed at Forest Lawn Hollywood Hills to make out a spot in hopes of catching a glimpse of Jackson's private funeral at the cemetery for Hollywood icons and where a grandmother of his is reportedly buried.

The Filipino, who described himself as an artist and a real estate investor, drove all the way from Huntington Beach. She arrived at the private cemetery at 2 a.m. on Monday.

Kirkhoff displayed her talents on artwork in her iPod and her song "Never Say Goodbye," which she had handwritten in big letters on a poster board.

Children's book

"I want to make a children's book about my idol," Kirkhoff said.

TV news reporters, with their cameramen trailing behind, took turns interviewing her, as well as the many fans who have also staked their spots at the cemetery.

Tony Morales Gonzales, who was visiting Los Angeles, heard of the impromptu plea of her family back in Pasong, Marikina—to make sure that she got to the Staples Center and be part of the moment that has captured the world's attention.

Gonzales and her sister, Juliet Morales Bonifi, a caregiver based in Pavonia, a city east of Los Angeles, joined the pioneers in front of the huge memorial poster signed by hundreds of Jackson fans.

78-year-old fan

Lita Balmonte, originally from Sikatuna Village, Quezon City, did not get on a plane or drive a car to get to the Staples Center. Balmonte, who has been living in downtown Los Angeles for the past two years, simply walked.

Balmonte said he was there to pay tribute to his idol. Jackson, whom he has admired ever since the King of Pop released his "Thriller" album, Balmonte added that he grew up listening to the pop superstar's music.

Eddie Dilbora, formerly from West Triangle, Quezon City, also walked to the Staples Center during his break from work.

Yvonne White arrived at the Staples Center wearing her two tickets to the memorial service which she had just claimed at the Dodger Stadium. "I will take my mom who is 70-years old and who is also a fan of Michael Jackson," she said.

White and her mother will join thousands of fans in the star-studded memorial service.

Circus in town

The organizers expressed hope that the memorial, scheduled at 10 a.m., two hours after the burial, would be a somber one.

But the eulogizing over the late colorful entertainer would be preceded by a month of circus elephants from downtown Los Angeles' trade center on the Staples Center.

In keeping with the tradition of parading animals when a circus comes to town, the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey, which began a five-day stint Wednesday at the Staples, was scheduled to use its pachyderm attractions early Tuesday morning.

Authorities were hoping that the march of the circus animals, estimated to take two hours beginning at 3:30 a.m., would be done by the time crowds streaming the memorial start heading for downtown Los Angeles.

Some fans of Jackson, a master showman and animal lover who kept a zoo at his famed Neverland Ranch, might actually relish the idea that a circus came to town on the day the world gave the King of Pop a massive mall-loving send-off.

FILAM FANS Caregiver Juliet Morales Bonifi (left) from Carriere, Pangasinan, and her sister, businesswoman Tony Morales Gonzales from Pasong, Marikina, pose in front of the Staples Center. JOSE CARLOS CRUZ

25M voters may have to register again, says Comelec

From page A1

Since the election automation law was passed in January 2007, about 23 million voters have registered their biometrics.

"The opinion of our congressmen is that biometrics should be mandatory... Before, we thought it was optional. So now, with that authority, we will require about 25 million voters to go back to election offices," Jimenez said.

No penalty

But he acknowledged that it would be very difficult to ensure that all of them would be able to submit the necessary information by Oct. 31, the registration deadline.

Though there is no penalty for failing to submit to a biometrics capture, Jimenez said people should submit so it is to refer to help the Comelec eliminate "nuisance" candidates who run for public office.

Cagayan de Oro Rep. Rufus Rodriguez insisted yesterday that biometrics registration was mandatory, and that the Comelec should see to it that voters know this.

LGUs urged to help but ...

Representatives Carlos Padilla of Nueva Vizcaya and Ma. Nikki Belmonte of Tarlac del. yesterday also urged the Comelec to see to it that local government officials were not depriving would-be voters in rival political camps of the chance to register.

Padilla and Belmonte said that Comelec officials tended to be overwhelmed by local government units (LGUs) in handling voter registration because of their lack of manpower.

Because of these ties with the LGUs, registration in some areas has become "nominal," depending on whom the people who want to register support.

There have been instances when campaigns to be used were hindered whenever the supporters of the incumbent re-election bid of the local would try to register, according to the two lawmakers.

"Usually, the Comelec asks for help from LGUs to implement the registration, and there were complaints that if the supporters of the incumbent re-election bid ask for help, the Comelec office will say that the machine is broken," Magsaysay told a hearing of the House oversight committee.

Padilla also said that people in his district had to travel down to four towns across mountains just to be able to get to the Comelec office in town.

"Imagine after four hours of an ordeal, only to be told the machine broke down? Eh, will not return [to register] anymore," Padilla said.

He suggested that the Comelec write to the local officials to remind them that this practice had been outlawed and should be stopped.

Additional budget

Magsaysay also suggested that the Comelec request for additional budget in case more election offices were needed so that they would not have to ask for help from local officials.

Santiestevan said the concerns had already been brought to the Comelec en banc, and it has already passed a resolution prohibiting its personnel from seeking assistance from local politicians.

"Registration should be nonpartisan," Santiestevan said.

Charter change

Santiestevan also said that while it may be feasible to include a plebiscite on the ratification of constitutional convention delegates in the 2010 polls, he said it may be "messy."

"But it is an issue that is complex because this involves the fundamental law before the plebiscite, there must be massive information drive and discussions among our people because we are tinkering with the Constitution. For me, this complicates the whole matter," he said.

Santiestevan added that amending the fundamental law of the land involved more than just a plebiscite to get the people's approval.

"We can add our section [to the ballot] but what about the significance, the import of this activity? For the information drive for full enfranchisement, we need sufficient time. So how much more if you add plebiscite?" Santiestevan said.

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Gin Kings try to push Beermen to precipice

GIN Miguel's Gabe Freeman fears possession under pressure from a phalanx of Gordon players, led by Chico Lanete (#6).

PBA salutes founding commissioner Prieto

PRIETO

Like NCAA, UAAP may still expand

By Jaccinto W. Paye

UAAP PRESIDENT Anton Montinola at last FEU 224-2 from left) and Inquirer VP for marketing Joel Advincula seal with a handshake an agreement making Libra a partner of the country's premier collegiate sports league. Witnessing the signing are FEU athletic director Mark Molina (left) and trainer Arnold Chito dela Vega and UAAP board secretary-treasurer Jocelyn de Leon of FEU.

Resurgent Painters eyeing Maierhofer

By Jaccinto W. Paye

MAIERHOFER

MAPAY HUEY ALCANTARA TERRO

RP Cuppers fit for battle versus tough Pakistanis

By Cedell P. Tapas

Miñoza joins fray in ICTSI Pueblo stage

Cyna, Louise among Oregon pacesetters

Loss of focus derails RP Youth Gamers' bids

By Jane Navarro

Blazers put Agustin-Stags chemistry to test

By Cedell P. Tejas

KEN ST. DENEGIE COACH RICHARD DEL Rosario admits he is not surprised at the way San Sebastian started the 85th NCAA season.

The Stags quickly installed themselves as one of the teams to beat with a one-sided victory over Perpetual Help and a stunning upset of San Beda both in the first week of the tournament.

"I'm not surprised," said Del Rosario, who quickly points to San Sebastian coach Jim Agustin, a fellow newcomer to the NCAA coaching ranks, as the man responsible for the Stags' turnaround. "He's a smart player and he's also a good coach."

It will be Del Rosario and the Blazers' turn to test Agustin and the Stags at 4 p.m. today when the two embattled teams dispute the solo lead at the PhilSports Arena in San Juan.

Lawton and Perpetual Help collide in a battle of winless teams at 2 p.m.

The Knights are on a skid, hoping to lose their 13-and-seventeen incidence to their first two games. The Altas are on a similar trend, but they look to back losses count in the form of blowouts.

The Stags are the favorites following two overwhelming victories, including an 80-77 triumph over defending champion San Beda.

Although they are unranked, the Blazers sensibly struggled before edging through against Angeles University Foundation, 67-76, and Mapua, 74-70.

Del Rosario called their clash with the Stags "David vs Goliath," one of the matches that he said will define the Blazers' season.

The Blazers also won their first two games of the season, before losing 1/3 of the next 12 to bounce out of contention in the Final Four.

TEAM SKY BANK'S Fabian Cancellara rides behind Columbia-High Road's Mark Cavendish during the mid-stage of the Tour de France. Cancellara finished behind Cavendish to keep the overall lead. At third place and 40 seconds behind Cancellara in the overall standings is 21-year-old Lance Armstrong. AFP

Laylo bolsters 'Victory' drive

By Ray Leaños

DRUEDEN OLYMPIAN AND GRANDMASter Darwin Laylo held top seed GM Rogelio Antonio Jr. to a draw in the eighth-and-penultimate round yesterday and breezed to his 10th chances in the 2009 Victory Central Mall-National Open chess championship at the Victory Central Mall in Bonanonito, Cabanatuan City.

The 28-year-old Laylo raised his total to 5.5 points, half a point ahead of Antonio, second seed GM John Paul Gomez, Int. Master Richard Bitoon, No. 3 GM Mark Hengaju and unbeaten Al Benedicto to the sportiest chase for the P300,000 top purse.

At victory over Bitoon, who also split the point with Gomez in the ninth round being held at precarious last night until push Laylo beyond reach of his pursuers in the tournament organized by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines and supported by Victory Mall and Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

But a draw, coupled with a victory by Antonio, Gomez, Hengaju or Bitoneville will necessitate a tiebreaker for the title.

Hengaju halved the point with Fide Master Leonardo Castro to stay in connection with Bitoneville, who stunned sixth seed IM Rolando Nolte.

GM Jayson Gonzales settled for a draw with Daniel Canon and bowed out of title contention with 5.5 points.

Also in the same boat were Fide Barbi Sadora and Glen Dalma, NM Emmanuel Senador, Christian Arroyo, Alvaro John Dato, Casano and Carlos.

Sadora and Dato agreed to a truce while Dalma, Senador and Arroyo trounced Richard de la Cruz, Efren Aguirre and Salgado Gamas, respectively, in the eighth round.

Standings after eight rounds:
6 Laylo — 5 pts
2-4 tied — 5 pts each: 2. Antonio, J. Gomez, M. Hengaju, B. Bitoon, N. Dalma
5-8 — 4.5 each: A. Benedicto, L. Castro, C. Senador, C. Arroyo, L. Gonzales, A. Dato, D. Canon
9-19 — 4: Sagaysay, J. Mendoza, P. Ubilla, R. Nolte, J. Dato, C. Dato

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Truce urged for feuding sports officials

SENATOR CHE ESCUDERO YESTERday appealed for truce among the warring factions in local sports as four Filipino athletes await focus on their preparations for the Laro Southeast Asian Games this December.

Escudero said in a statement that there is running out on the athletes who could not train properly in their leaders continue to bicker over who should run their respective national sports associations.

The Philippines is hoping to improve on its shocking ninth-place finish (12 gold medals) in the 2007 Thailand edition, two years after winning the Games' overall championship in 2005.

"If they [quarreling officials] truly have the best interests of the nation at heart, then here's a reason why they can come together to ensure a decent finish for our athletes," said Escudero, perhaps the Senate's most astute sports fan.

The youthful senator called on the leaders of the Philippine Sports Commission and the Philippine Olympic Committee to "take the lead in forging a truce between rival groups."

At least 30 NSAs are wracked by leadership disputes with the majority of them identifying themselves with the camp of either POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco or PSC chair Harry Angping, chief ally of shooting head and Bert Cojuangco foe Art Macapagal.

"The country's SEA games chief of mission Mario Tandiansen last week admitted that the composition of the 519 delegation has not been finalized less than six months before the start of the Games.

"Our athletes are practically in limbo," said Escudero. "There are only 135 days left before the Games. Even the best of our athletes need to know if they are going to Laos." —Antonio M. Pepa

RP brings home silver, bronze

SINGAPORE—[EDITOR'S] BY HIS MILITARY attaché, Philippine chief of ministers to the Asian Youth Games (AYG) Col. Cyrus Sitoy is no tough as ordinary boot camps.

Sitoy, duties he is a veteran of the war against the hated Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, where he says he was almost killed in the battle-field. His scouts also say he has had many encounters with members of and insurgents in remote areas of the Philippines.

He is a graduate of the Philippine Military academy and has also joined the local Olympic body where he was installed as president of the national table tennis association.

Sitoy calls himself "the new old or the Mark" who is willing to learn the ropes. The Singapore assignment was his first big investment to groom. In the time he was appointed to the post, he "do not know what the job entailed. But he had enough confidence in himself to accept the challenge.

* * *

As the days passed, the young colonel appeared as he comes used more plans. The competition was on the fourth—day, he said, and yet our athletes had not won a single medal.

The colonel was not shy to admit that he had, in fact, shed a tear in the privacy of his hotel room.

They were tears of depression, he said, over the conditions of sports development in the Philippines. He equates this with the country's progress.

It rain is bad, sad state, he said, as he compared the Philippines to its Asean neighbors, some of which performed better than we did.

Of course, the colonel's mood had changed by the time the competition was over. He was bringing home a silver and a bronze.

* * *

More than a thousand athletes from all over Asia participated in the AYG.

Philippine Sports Commission chair Harry Angping said the competition will serve as a dry-run for next year's Youth Olympic Games, which Singapore will also host.

"But Singapore, I believe, is coming to right into much bigger sporting event. I believe it is looking to stage a bid for the 2010 Asian Games," the chair said.

As for our country's performance in the recent AYG, Harry said it was a very good start for our young athletes.

The Philippines finished 18th in the overall medal tally and fourth in the Southeast Asian region behind Thailand (third), host Singapore (fifth) and Vietnam (sixth).

* * *

It's not surprising then the Salvador gals found it difficult to compete against and score a single basket in the three-on-three competition.

Their athletes required them to wear a long-sleeved blouse over their sleeveless uniform, a pair of jogging pants and a headdress called hijab which covered the head and neck.

The hapless high school girls, whom the competition was held, did not have an opportunity to practice with the hijab.

Sources in the host nations: The RP girls were not allowed but trailing behind Uzbekistan, 36-28, when the game was halted. The victory was awarded the win by default.

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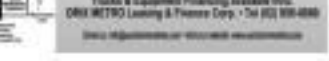

80-6-pin SJC cockfest today

MORE THAN 80 FIGHTS ARE ON TAP IN the 'BGL Aces and Mr. Kipling 4-Cock Derby today at the San Juan Coliseum.

Two derbies, hosted by SJC regulars Manolet and Rudy Lorenzo and offering P400,000 to the winners, will start rank.

Up next at the same venue is the 2009 Fastest Mile Free-Cock Derby tomorrow. Entry fee is P1,500.

Participants will receive a P1,000 cash bonus for every fight won, according to SJC pit manager Renato Diaz.

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DID YOU KNOW

THE CORNERSTONE of the current Quezon City Hall was laid in 1967, but the building was completed only a decade later because of the city's financial difficulties.
—Cyrill L. Arcadencio, Inquirer Research

Big-time car theft ring inside LTO busted

By Nancy C. Carvajal

THE POLICE YESTERDAY BUSTED A BIG-TIME syndicate which allegedly issued authentic license plates and Land Transportation Office (LTO) documents for vehicles stolen in Metro Manila.

Two of those arrested, Orly Villaflor and Roberto Aristorenas, were employees of the LTO plate section.

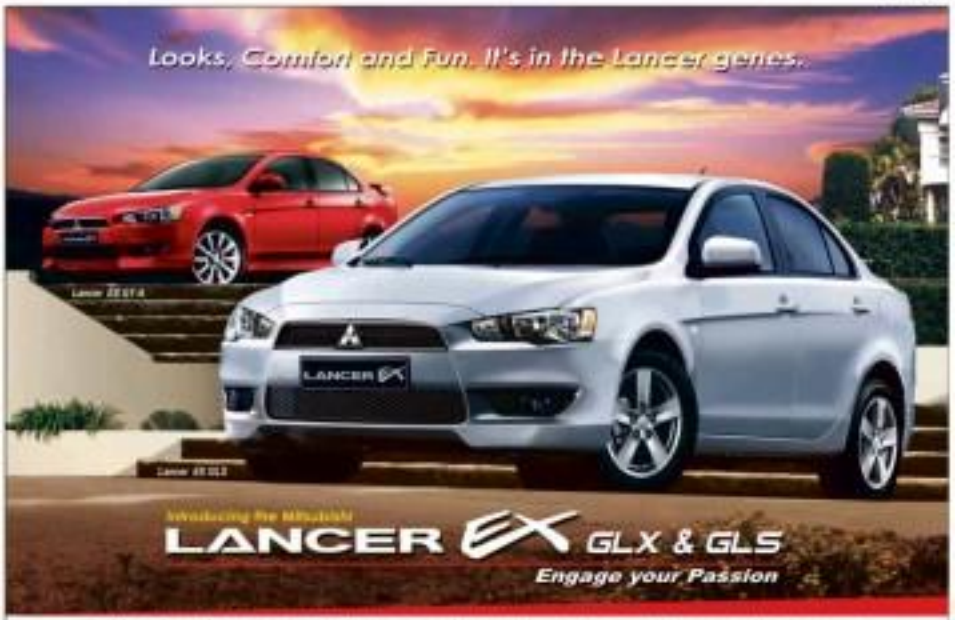
The chief was identified as Vilma Castillo, who claimed she worked for six successive administrations in the LTO compound on East Avenue, Quezon City.

Found in her possession were dozens of blank Official Receipts (ORs) and Certificates of Registration (CR) forms. Also seized during the operation were several blank LTO license plates.

Supt. Napoleon Campos, who led the operation, said they were looking for four more LTO employees believed to be members of the group as well.

"The raid comes six months of surveillance and talking to informants. We have deployed at least 200 policemen, including members of the Special Weapons and Tactics [unit]. [This] is the biggest [operation] to be mounted against the syndicate," Campos said.

During yesterday's operation, the police raided eight establishments inside the LTO compound.



Big-time car theft ring inside LTO busted

From page A1

committed first thereon.

The establishments, which did not have agreements, sold them, swiping from clothes to car insurance. The police, however, said that some of the owners served as fronts for the syndicate and employed "fronts."

Castillo told the reporters that a front gets for the bank LTO clearances for vehicles they were selling at P700 each.

Carazo, however, said, that a "set"—composed of an OR, CR and a license plate—sold for much more.

"That is not only falsification but also economic sabotage because each set could be sold for a minimum of P100,000 and the government loss probably has been defrauded of hundreds of millions of pesos," he added.

Castillo, meanwhile, denied that she was a member of the syndicate.

"I don't know any car thieves. We only deal with people who ask us to help them process their OR and CR," she said in Filipino.

Glenda Lacambra, an employee who worked in one of the shops which was raided, also said that she was involved in illegal activities.

"All are not doing anything illegal, we just offer our services to those who are busy and cannot attend to these things," she said.

Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales, National Capital Region Police Director (NCRPO) director, who led the operations, said the raid was aimed at drastically reducing car theft cases in Metro Manila.

"The daily report of stolen vehicles has escalated and by breaking the source of the documents and plates numbers, we will immediately decrease the rate of motor vehicle [cases] and this and to stop the rip-off in robbery," Rosales said.

Supt. Marinelo Maralit, SOU-99 action theft head, said the stolen vehicles commonly targeted by carjackers was the Toyota Fortuner.

"At least the three motorcycles that were recovered from the shop are being stolen daily in Metro Manila since January," Maralit told the reporters.

Also present during the operation was were Quezon City Police District officials headed by Chief Supt. Elmo San Diego and Supt. Leocadio Santiago, Jr. of Eastern Police District, said vehicles of the compound were generally vacant.

Venezuela envoy hurt in Edsa mishap

By Nina Catherine Calleja

A DIPLOMAT FROM VENEZUELA was injured after the car he was driving hit a post by a flyover ramp and a speed lane on the southbound lane of Edsa, near the Magallanes interchange, just after midnight yesterday.

SPO2 Miguel Tuscano, Makati police traffic investigator, said in his report that Manuel Jesus Rocha, charge d'affaires of the Venezuelan Embassy in the Philippines, was alone in his BMW when he met an accident at around 12:45 a.m.

He added that Rocha was on his way to Magallanes from Ayala Avenue when a vehicle suddenly cut his path.

Rocha swerved his car to the right to avoid the vehicle but hit a sign post and a flower installed by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.

The injured caused the BMW to spin around and fall on its side, causing slight injuries to the diplomat, police said.

Rocha, however, did not go to the hospital or seek for medical assistance. Instead, he flagged down a taxi cab and went home. His driver, identified as Edmund Tinoyo, later went to the scene to report the accident and to claim the diplomat's car which was badly damaged.

THE DIPLOMAT'S badly damaged BMW car is loaded on a towing truck. — RICARDO SARMIENTO

C-5 Road extension won't imperil Metro water supply, DPWH insists

By Marlon Ramos

THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC Works and Highways (DPWH) yesterday insisted that its plan to build a 486-meter concrete road in Barangay Dela Paz, Quezon City, was the most practical option as it would save the government some P600 million in compensation cost.

Public Works Undersecretary Rustico Mateo also silenced the fears of some local officials that the C-5 Road extension project might affect the "structural integrity" of the aqueducts of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) buried beneath the area.

As the DPWH would only construct roads above the aqueducts, Mateo said it was "mathematically impossible" for the project to put the water supply of some eight million Metro Manila residents in peril as alleged by Barangay Old Balara chairman Ruben Torresagan.

The aqueducts, he said, were buried at least 20 meters beneath the area.

"The road project does not require diggings. If we were to put up a tall building in that area, then maybe it might affect the aqueducts," Mateo told the DAILY TRIBUNE.

Torresagan had petitioned the Supreme Court to stop the project, claiming it would damage the aqueducts that supply fresh water from La Mesa Dam.

The barangay chair suggested that the DPWH should instead build a road traversing through the property of the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

But the cost of constructing a road through the UP area would only make the P700 million road project almost twice as expensive, Mateo said.

"If we construct the road (as suggested by Torresagan), we will need at least P600 million more in buying private lots and transferring two UP buildings which will be affected by the project," he said.

He said the government would also need to relocate at least 676 families who would be displaced from the area.

Since their construction several years ago, Mateo said the aqueducts have not suffered any structural defects despite the fact that millions of vehicles pass through the roads directly above them.

He said concrete roads in the Commonwealth, Tandang Sora and Luzon Avenue areas were built directly above the aqueducts. "The possibility of the road construction affecting the structural integrity of the aqueducts is very remote. Remember that the aqueducts had been there for quite some time and yet no areas detected any defects on it," Mateo added.

FREED all stolen upon her arrival at Naia Terminal 3. — RICARDO SARMIENTO

Maid who returned P2.1M back from HK

By Nina Catherine Calleja

A 30-YEAR-OLD FILIPINO DOmestic helper in Hong Kong who earned praise for returning $52,1 million in cash and checks which she found in a package Hong Kong she only did what was right.

Upon her arrival yesterday at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Mildred Ibon, a native of Bandung, Nueva Vizcaya, was met by her children who greeted her warmly. Later on, Ibon, who was camera-shy, faced the media.

Her employer said everyone in their hometown was so proud of her mother because "she showed goodness."

Ibon flew into the country on board Cebu Pacific Flight 5J111. Her round-trip ticket was paid for by Nueva Vizcaya Rep. Carlos Padilla.

According to Padilla who met Ibon at the airport, the House of Representatives has approved a resolution commending her for her honesty.

"She's a rare species, one out of a million," Padilla said, adding that despite Ibon's modest income she said, she managed to stay upright.

Padilla was referring to Ibon's experience at the hands of her employer in Hong Kong where she had dumped with fabulous sounds. The owner is still pending.

Ibon, for her job and was bestowed the honor of being the one by a pending court case. She assisted to rummaging through garbage, looking for recyclable items which is she could sell for extra money.

Padilla said he was inviting Ibon to visit the House of Representatives so that she could personally receive the commendation from Speaker Prospero Nograles.

On top of the commendation, Ibon will receive P150,000 in cash from Padilla and the Nueva Vizcaya provincial government in addition to refreshments for her two children.

Ibon months ago, Ibon was collecting scraps when she saw an envelope containing cash and checks worth P2.1 million.

She called the owner and when her phoned she the envelope and returned the money she saw given to her by her employer.

Ibon will fly back to Hong Kong to attend court hearings against her employer.

Cop outpost now watches over Pasig drug den

By DJ Yap

THE PASIG POLICE YESTERDAY said the outpost they put up in the heart of the Maganyan Compound, the alleged den of drug traffickers near city hall, has already proven to be helpful in driving out drug parlors and known users there.

Senior Supt. Napoleon Villegas, the newly installed officer-in-charge of the Pasig Police Station, said residents of the compound were generally supportive of the operations of the outpost which was being manned by police officers and civilian volunteers.

"Since their numbers are many. They can drive away possibly now," he said of the residents.

Villegas said most of the drug pushers in the area were no longer visible, and those who nominally visited the compound to buy drugs were seen hesitant to do so upon seeing police officers in the area.

"When they see there are police stations they think twice about entering because there would be questions, like where they are going, who they're visiting, and so on, "the official said.

He said the residents themselves wished to remove the "aluba (magic illusionist)" tag that had been placed on their community since news of the large-scale drug operations hit the headlines about two months ago.

Villegas noted that the residents themselves provided the lead where the outpost, a tent, was put up.

He said it was being manned by police officers and members of the city's Barrio Cadet Executive Council in a 24-hour basis. He also credited Mayor Robert Eusebio for initiating the project with the city police.

Villegas, who formerly headed the Eastern Police District Mobile Force, said drugs and other criminal activities would be the focus of his attention as the new police chief.

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Finance and Industry
Securities and Exchange Commission
SEC Bldg., EDSA, Greenhills, Mandaluyong City

SEC Memorandum Circular No. 10
Series of 2006

TO : All Pre-Need Corporations
SUBJECT : Revised Minimum Trust Fund Contribution Rates for Pre-Need Corporations

TO further protect the interests of planholders and enable Pre-Need Companies to efficiently meet their contractual obligations in full, the Commission resolved to amend Rules 15.2 and 16.1 of the Rules Rules of the Regulation and Sale of Pre-Need Plans as follows:

Rule 15.2

15.2 The minimum contributions to the Trust Fund shall be fifty (50%) percent of the plans and fifty (50%) of the total amount collected for other plans unless a higher planned contribution is determined by the industry and approved by the Commission."

Rule 16.1

Rule 16.1 In cases of installment payments, the minimum contributions to the trust fund shall be in accordance with the following schedule:

Payment Received	15% Plans	Educational, Pension and Other Plans
Collection at the 1st (1st) of the Contract Price	10%	10%
Collection at the 2nd (2nd) of the Contract Price	20%	20%
Collection at the 3rd (3rd) of the Contract Price	30%	30%
Collection at the 4th (4th) of the Contract Price	40%	40%
Collection at the 5th (5th) of the Contract Price	50%	50%

1. The foregoing contribution rates to the trust fund shall apply to the following pre-need plans:
   (a) Existing Plans
   (i) Additional plans registered on or after July 15, 2006;
   (ii) Unpaid balances of previously registered plans subject of an application for plan conversion filed on or after July 15, 2006; and
   (iii) Unpaid balances of previously registered plans subject of an application for plan conversion to another type of plan filed on or after July 15, 2006.
   (b) New plans registered on or after July 15, 2006.
2. Applications for increase in price and conversion of previously registered plans filed before July 15, 2006 shall not be covered by the Memorandum Circular.
3. All circulars, rules and regulations or parts thereof that may be inconsistent with this Memorandum Circular shall be deemed repealed, amended or modified accordingly.
4. This Memorandum Circular shall take effect on July 15, 2006 or fifteen days following its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation, whichever is later.

Issued on July 4, 2006 at EDSA, Greenhills, Mandaluyong City, Philippines.

For the Commission:
(Sgd.) Fe B. Barin
Chairperson

SEC - July 5, 2006

NBI warns public, especially travelers, vs credit card fraud

By Tina G. Santos

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF Investigation yesterday warned the public, particularly frequent travelers, against purchasing airline tickets from unaccredited agents after could be part of or in connivance with an organization groups involved in credit card fraud.

In the same time, the bureau also advised the public to be cautious in using their credit cards, saying there can be cases of misuse of credit cards.

The warning came following the arrest of four Nigerians who were part of a syndicate which allegedly purchased electronic plane tickets through fraudulently acquired credit cards.

The suspects, who were arrested in Cavite over the weekend, were identified as Simeon Akindutire Ositeanwu, also Ositeanwu Ebere, 27, the alleged leader of the group; Bond Mayuni Ehidiyo, 30; Ediriano Adaire, 32; Olorunjo Michael Ayegbusi, 28, all residing at Unit 1 Ocampo Street, Barangay Caridad.

Authorities are now on the hunt for the fifth suspect, Akindutire Ikechukwune Ogwuda, 28, who remains at large.

The suspects, who were detained at the NBI jail, were charged for violation of Republic Act 8484 (Access Device Regulation Act of 1998), said Varnate de Guzman III, head of the NBI Anti-Fraud and Computer Crimes Division.

Seized from them were laptop computers, USB devices, exotic travel headband universal, invoices of money transfers, a skimming device, various blank credit cards and other materials they used in their illegal activities.

Police Chief Supt. Avelino Razon Jr. of PNP Anti-Fraud and Computer Crimes Division, explained that the suspects either used a skimming device to duplicate credit cards of unsuspecting victims, or fetch information of legitimate credit card users from merchant websites.

"Those are skimming devices that are very small, credit card-holders would not even notice that their cards were already swiped and copied using those devices," Mallari said. "So it pays to personally bring your credit card to the cashier or keep in view on your card every time you make purchases."

The Nigerians' modus operandi involved offering, through the Internet, cheap airline tickets, domestic or international, to various destinations to interested users.

Prospective victims pay in cash but the suspects buy the plane tickets under the buyer's name using cloned, hacked or stolen credit card credentials, and would then make the cards they used look like the buyer's.

The NBI said the arrest of the suspects came following the complaint of Philippine Airlines.

NBI DIRECTOR Nestor Mantaring shows blank credit cards used by four Nigerians who were arrested for their involvement in credit card fraud activities in the country. — RAY LLANTO

More than 1,400 arrested in China

URUMQI, CHINA—ETHNIC Uighurs swelled with armed police on Tuesday in a bush protest in the western Chinese region of Xinjiang, where at least 156 people have been killed and more than 1,400 people arrested in the worst ethnic violence there in decades.

Most of the gangs of about 200 Uighurs were women protesting the arrests of their husbands in the massive crackdown on members of the Muslim minority by Chinese authorities since the violence two days ago that left at least 156 people dead and more than 1,400 people injured, according to state media reports.

The turbulent protest was in front of a precinct office near the big Uighur district Urumqi is not the aftermath of Sunday's clash, when hundreds of vehicles and shops were wrecked.

The women, wearing ornate flowered head scarves, flocked a road from command that their husbands and children had been arrested. But police were at one end of the road and paramilitary police were at the other.

One woman said her husband was taken away and she would rather die than live without him.

As they marched down the street, paramilitary police in green camouflage fatigues with sticks marched toward them and pushed the crowd back. A woman fell. The hotel scuffle ended when the police retreated. Police in black uniforms with assault rifles and tear gas guns took up positions on the other side of the crowd.

The women, however, stayed in the street, pumping their fists in the air and wailing. Moments later, police tried to ward the protest off of the crowd's breaking them down a side street. Two hour one out of a side alley and a policeman hurled at them, "Go home" and grabbed one around the neck, pushing him.

The 90-minute protest ended when the women walked back into a market area without any resistance.

Police had also started trying to shepherd the journalists the way.

The new protest came after state media said on Tuesday that police had arrested 1,434 suspects for their roles in Sunday's riot.

The violence does not bode well for China's efforts to mollify long-simmering ethnic tensions between the minority Uighur people, largely Muslim, and the ethnic Han Chinese in Xinjiang—a sprawling region three hours the size of Texas that shares borders with Mongolia, Afghanistan and other Central Asian countries.

Mobile phone service and the social networking site Twitter have been blocked, and Internet links also were cut in several areas.

A two-day protest by 200 people on Monday was broken up in a crowded city, Kashgar, and the official Xinhua News Agency said police had evidence that demonstrators were trying to organize more unrest in Kashgar, Hotan and Aksu.

Hotan police had raided several groups plotting unrest in Xinjiang in Urumqi, as well as in a former east coast that is home to a Muslim population.

The unrest in Urumqi began on Sunday after 1,000 to 3,000 protesters gathered in the People's Square and protested the June 25 death of Uighur factory workers killed in a riot in southern China. Xinhua said two died, other sources put the figure higher. Internet and social networking reports on the incident had raised tensions in Xinjiang over the last few weeks.

Many Uighurs (pronounced WEE-gers) haven't been wooed by the rapid economic development Xinjiang has seen independence, while others feel they're being marginalized in their homeland. The Han—China's ethnic majority—have been flooding into Xinjiang as the region becomes more developed.

The government often says the Uighurs should be grateful for the roads, railways, schools, hospitals and oil fields it has been building in Xinjiang, a region known for crumbling deserts and snowy mountain ranges. AP

Obama praises Putin

MOSCOW—U.S. President Barack Obama on Tuesday praised Russia's most powerful politician, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, as the two leaders met for the first time, saying there was an excellent opportunity to improve US-Russia relations.

Shortly undressed, the two men exchanged pleasantries at the start of a meeting at Putin's home residence outside Moscow overshadowed by Obama's criticism of Putin's last week in a pre-trip interview in a move with one foot much to the past.

"I am aware of not only the extraordinary work that you've done on behalf of the Russian people in your previous role as prime minister, uh, as president, but in your current role as prime minister," Obama said.

Putin, looking about and more relaxed in sneaking on casual suit for Obama, said there had been periods of joyride ascent and confusion in US-Russia relations but added: "We link hopes for development of our relationship with your name." Obama's meeting with Putin, a former KGB spy who served as president from 2000-2008 before handing over the top Kremlin job to his handpicked successor Dmitry Medvedev, follows talks on Monday with Medvedev.

They produced agreements on a target for cuts in nuclear arms, a deal to let US troops fly across Russia to fight in Afghanistan and the establishment of a joint government commission to improve relations between the two former Cold War superpowers. Reuters

Vietnam War architect Robert McNamara dies

WASHINGTON—ROBERT S. McNamara, the brainy Pentagon chief who directed the escalation of the Vietnam War despite private doubts the war was winnable or worth fighting, died on Monday at 93.

McNamara, revealed his anguished feelings decades after the Americans defeat that came called "McNamara's war."

"We of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations acted according to what we thought were the principles and traditions of our country. But we were wrong. We made terrible mistakes," McNamara told The Associated Press in 1995, the year his best-selling memoir appeared.

McNamara died at 7:30 a.m. at his home, his wife Diana told the AP. She said he had been in failing health for some time.

Closely identified with the president's early years, McNamara was a forceful public optimist. He predicted that American intervention would enable the South Vietnamese, despite internal feuds, to stand by themselves "by the end of 1965." He was proved on and in 1975, with more than 58,000 dead Americans, Saigon fell.

Lawyerly and a student of statistical analysis, McNamara was recruited to run the Pentagon by President John F. Kennedy in 1961 from the presidency of the Ford Motor Co.—where he and a group of colleagues had been known as the "whiz kids."

He stayed in the defense post for seven years, longer than anyone else since the job's creation in 1947. He left on the verge of a nervous breakdown and became president of the World Bank. In the new post, he threw himself into the intricacies of international development and argued that improving how was a more promising path to peace than building up arms and ammo.

McNamara was a distinctive figure, with horn-rimmed glasses and slicked-back hair. Anti-war critics ridiculed him as an out-of-touch technocrat and made much of the fact that his middle name was "Strange." Simon and Garfunkel worked his name into a ditty about an unobeying government, and he once had to face an appearance at his trial through underground satellite hookup.

By the end of the Washington tenure, McNamara had come to doubt the value of widespread US bombing, and he was fighting with his generals. President Lyndon Johnson lost faith in persistence in him. McNamara would later write that he didn't know if he quit or was fired. AP

IN THIS Jan. 20, 1961 file photo viewed by the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library in Boston, President Kennedy sits with Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara (right), in the White House Oval Office in Washington. AP

Burma junta stage-manages visit by United Nations chief

RANGOON—BURMA'S MYSTERIOUS ruling junta wanted Ban Ki-moon to go into a grandiose drug museum through the back door to prevent this United Nations secretary-general from making a rock-star entrance.

But even public did really through the front door—a small victory after he had lost the bigger battles, notably a hoped-for meeting with jailed democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

After a two-day visit in which the pariah's chief to stage-manage the media's top diplomat at every step, Ban left the country with few prospects of ever-tightly loosening the iron grip on power held by military regime and his main chief, Senior Gen. Than Shwe.

If people were Ban acting independently to Burma. "That would cause Than Shwe to lose face," said Donald Berlins, a Burma expert at Japan's Waseda University. "So they want to manipulate him."

By snubbing Ban, the country's military rulers lost an opportunity to improve its standing among many of the world's nations that view the struggling country with rich reserves of gas and minerals as a pariah.

Inside Burma, Suu Kyi's opposition party said Than Shwe showed he is unwilling to pursue real change ahead of the 2010 elections, which would be the first in two decades.

Ban had asked to make his closing speech to diplomats and humanitarian groups on Saturday in a hotel, but the junta refused and forced him to instead speak at the government's Drug Elimination Museum. AP

WORLD BRIEFS

Oil facility attacked in Nigeria

ABUJA—Nigeria's main militant group said on Monday it had sabotaged a Chevron oil facility and seized a chemical tanker and six crew members, the latest in a string of attacks in Africa's biggest energy producer. The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) said it had attacked Chevron's Okan manifold late on Sunday in the southern Delta state, hours after it had dropped an oil well head operated by Royal Dutch Shell. The military confirmed the attack. AP

7 US soldiers killed in Afghanistan

KABUL—Gunmen and rockets killed seven American troops while three Nato troops died in a helicopter crash in one of the deadliest days for foreign troops in Afghanistan since the US-led invasion in 2001, officials said on Tuesday. Four of the deaths on Monday came in an ambush on a team of US military trainers in the militarily peaceful north, Afghan Chief Petty Officer Brian Hennigan, a US military spokesperson. AP

'Slumdog' child star gets new home

MUMBAI—"Slumdog Millionaire" child star Azharuddin Mohammed Ismail and his mother cannot ride their new home on Tuesday, leaving behind a row against world-class shanty for four-solid walls, doors that lock and an indoor toilet. "I was shocked when I saw this house," Ismail, said before leaving on one of his favorite third swings and hearing around the living room. "I want to thank Danny Boyle for giving us this flat." Boyle, the director of the Oscar-winning hit, said a source UN Habitat Centre said transfer the ENTIRE new two-bedroom apartment to Ashar's course when his home "ill, provided for Southern suburb. AP

16 dead in US drone attack in Pakistan

PESHAWAR—A United States missile strike unleashed a compound in a stronghold of Pakistani Taliban and left Baitullah Mehsud on Tuesday, killing 16 foreign and local militants, security officials said. The strike, carried out by a suspected unmanned US aircraft, destroyed a compound in the Zangara area of South Waziristan—part of Pakistan's northern tribal belt on the Afghan border—where Islamist militants are based. The missile strike is Taliban Mehsud in the middle of Ramadan, killing foreign and local militants, said a Pakistani security official on condition of anonymity in a reference to suspected al-Qaida and Taliban militants. AP

The WORLD

Tensions mount in Honduras

TEGUCIGALPA—SUPPORTERS OF OUSTED PRESIDENT Manuel Zelaya on Monday vowed to widen protests and block trade nationwide as the deposed leader headed to Washington for a meeting with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

Thousands of Zelaya supporters have demonstrated since his overthrown eight days ago, including 2,000 who rallied peacefully on Monday near the presidential palace. Anger increased following the death of a teenager shot by soldiers on Sunday as a record total to break through an airport fence where a plane carrying Zelaya was prevented from landing.

"We're going to change strategies," said organizer Rafael Alegría, 57. "We cannot live under the current state."

Alegría said they planned to take their fight nationwide by blocking major highways and border crossings in an effort to impede trucks carrying fuel and merchandise.

Zelaya's plane took off late Monday bound for Washington where he was to meet the following day with Clinton as the Obama administration weighs responses to his ouster. The talks will be the administration's highest-level contact with Zelaya since his removal from office.

"We're very focused on the need for a dialogue to restore him back (to office) and restore the democratic order," State Department spokesperson Ian Kelly said.

On Monday, the family of a slain teenager—identified as Isis Obed Murillo Menera, 19, from Zelaya's home state of Olancho—was mourning past the airport with his body in a coffin in the back of a pickup truck, sobbing, yelling and shaking their fists at riot police and soldiers.

The interim government closed the airport on Monday and soldiers and military vehicles continued to block the runways.

Zelaya got as close as several hundred feet above Tegucigalpa on Sunday in his continuing effort to return and reclaim power, but the Venezuelan pilots of his plane—on loan from President Hugo Chávez—decided not to risk a crash after circling the airport and spotting the obstacles on the runway. AP

SUPPORTERS of ousted Honduran President Manuel Zelaya march to protest the death of Isis Obed Murillo, 19, and the military coup in Tegucigalpa on July 6. AFP

UN council condemns North Korea

UNITED NATIONS—THE UN SECURITY Council on Monday condemned North Korea's latest ballistic missile launches as a violation of council resolutions and a threat to regional and international security.

Pyongyang fired seven missiles into the Sea of Japan on Saturday—the United States' July 4 Independence Day—in an apparent act of defiance of Washington, which has worked closely on firms suspected of helping the North to its arms and missiles trade.

The launches also alarmed Japan and South Korea, which are within range of North Korean missiles. Japan—currently an elected council member—said it had requested Monday's meeting of the US-nation body.

"The members of the Security Council condemned and expressed grave concern at the launches, which constitute a violation of UN Security Council resolutions and pose a threat to regional and international security," council president Ambassador Ruhakana Rugunda of Uganda said.

North Korea, which was banned from ballistic missile launches in a Security Council resolution passed last month, "must comply fully with its obligations," Rugunda said from the council room to journalists.

Security Council members appealed to "all parties to refrain from any action that could aggravate the security situation in the region," he added.

Oral statements, which are not entered into the official record of Security Council proceedings, are the lowest level of council utterances. Western diplomats said they would have liked something more formal but were unable to win the agreement of China, the closest Pyongyang has to an ally on the council.

Council statements have to be unanimous and "for China, only an oral statement would work," one diplomat said, adding that during discussions Chinese officials appeared "quite nervous about how far the statement would go." Reuters

Pope seeks new financial order

VATICAN CITY—POPE BENEDICT XVI ON Tuesday called for a new world financial order guided by ethics, dignity and the search for the common good in the third encyclical of his pontificate.

In "Charity in Truth," Benedict denounced the profit-at-all-cost morality of the globalized economy and lamented that greed has brought about the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression.

"Profit is useful if it serves as a means toward an end," he wrote. "Once profit becomes the exclusive goal, if it is produced by improper means and without the common good as its ultimate end, it risks destroying wealth and creating poverty."

The document, in the works for two years, was released one day before leaders of the Group of Eight industrialized nations convene in southeast Italy to emerge from the global financial crisis.

The release was clearly designed to give world leaders a strong moral imperative to correct errors of the past, "which wreaked such havoc on the real economy," and make a more socially just and responsible world financial order.

"The economy needs ethics in order to function correctly—not any ethics, but ethics which is people-centered," he wrote.

The German-born Benedict, 82, has spoken out frequently about the impact of the crisis on the poor, particularly in Africa, which he visited earlier this year. But the encyclical, one of the most authoritative documents a pope can issue, marked a move toward church teaching by linking the bad, once long-standing doctrine on caring for the poor with current events. AP

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Editor Raul D. Marcelo • Associate Editor Carina S. Mariano

BUSINESS

Inflation drops to 22-year low in June

Bangko Sentral seen cutting policy rates

By Howard W. Dominguez and Michelle V. Remo

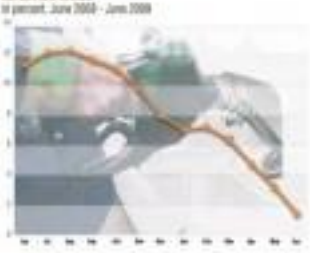
CONSUMER PRICES ROSE AT THEIR SLOWEST pace in 22 years in June, giving the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas room to cut rates further when its policy-making Monetary Board meets tomorrow.

The National Statistics Office yesterday reported that the annual inflation rate last month eased to 1.5 percent from 3.1 percent in May. The previous low was its April 1987, when the consumer price index (CPI) rose just 1 percent from the previous year.

Low inflation, which strips out some food and fuel prices, came in at 3.9 percent in June from a year earlier, the lowest in 17 months.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco said the June inflation

INFLATION /B2



PNB drops bid to acquire PBCom

By Doris C. Dumlao

TYCOON LUCIO TAN'S PHILIPPINE National Bank has lost interest in reclaiming control Philippine Bank of Communications whose controlling stake was recently put up for sale by the state-controlled Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp.

Another potential suitor, Security Bank Corp., said in a separate disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange that it has not submitted any firm offer to take up the 67 percent stake that was being auctioned.

The deadline to submit offers for PBCom lapsed recently but no bank has come forward to disclose its interest so far.

Industry sources said PNB, whose principal stockholder Lucio Tan had some personal exposure in PBCom, did not join the bidding because it was busy working on a merger with ailing Allied Banking Corp.

A source from another local bank that had looked at PBCom said the medium-sized bank, a niche player focused on the Philippine-Chinese community, may not add the much value to the bank's business.

Businessman Emilio Yap, who owns Philippine Trust Co., has likewise dropped out of the PBCom race earlier.

PNB DROPS B2

Brazil trip may translate to ₱8.2B in economic gains, agri exec claims

By Rina T. Chiongbian

THE PHILIPPINE STAKE TO OAS: At least ₱8.2 billion from government efforts to drum up business in Brazil, Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap claimed.

According to the Agriculture Department's project computation, the benefits are focused on the following sectors: ₱3.6 billion in sugar, ₱2.3 billion in coffee and ₱300 million in dairy.

Yap said his department is presently computing the economic gains from various international trips and trade fairs since the start of the year.

He said the gains from the Brazil trip can be computed by calculating the "import substitution" or the value of imports which the Philippines can produce locally as a result of its-up circuit during the trip.

Yap noted, however, that the "real value" of the trips might not be fully understood from such computation since jobs resulting from future economic gains could not yet be factored in.

"For example, what is the price of being able to supply bioethanol locally? And when you compute this factor, you will compute the jobs (generated). What is the price [tag] for that?" he said.

The computation also left out about ₱1.4 billion in dairy imports that could be "import substituted."

The Agriculture Department earlier announced that the Philippines had entered into five agreements with Brazil's agriculture agencies.

One such agreement called for the hosting of biotechnology and agribusiness expositions. While some observers are cautious, that tie-up is seen to open doors to other groups that can help Philippine agriculture.

The Agriculture Department's investment arm, the Philippine Agricultural Development and Commercial Corporation, also forged a memorandum of understanding with Brazil's leading government-supported biotech and agricultural research organization.

The two aims interest to conduct joint research projects, trade fairs, exchange of germplasm (animal and plant stocks for propagation) and equipment.

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BSP pushes bid to buy, sell bonds

Bills expected to lower power rates

By Jerry O. Baroa

ELECTRICITY CONSUMERS nationwide may expect lower electricity rates once the twin power bills auditioned by Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile are enacted.

Senate Bill No. 3147, or the Uniform Franchise Tax Act, and Senate Bill No. 3282, or the Electricity Rate Reduction, share the same goal of lowering power rates in the country by reducing government rents and royalties on distribution utilities and power generation companies, respectively.

According to Enrile, some 4.00 million lifeline customers are expected to get discounts ranging from 138 centavos per kilowatt-hour (kWh) to as much as 67 centavos per kWh.

In particular, those consuming 100 kWh monthly may save up to P67 from the current monthly bill estimate of P670, while those consuming 21 to 50 kWh are expected to save P22 from a monthly bill of P316.

Depending on their usage, other residential, industrial and commercial customers can expect lower monthly electricity bills, ranging from 11 centavos per kWh to 13 centavos per kWh. This would translate to about P23 to P65 savings in their monthly bills.

Also, the so-called "high load factor" customers, such as hospitals, semi-conductor industries, steam factories and the like, can expect a decrease of as much as P1.30 per kWh.

According to Enrile, the twin power bills will provide the stimulus that the local economy needs to survive the onslaught of the prevailing global crisis.

"Lower power rates will make local industries more competitive and give the consuming public more disposable income to pump-prime the economy," Enrile said.

SB 3147 proposes that government adopt a franchise tax regime where electric utilities are levied 2 percent on their gross sales/receipts/income in lieu of all national and local taxes.

SB 3282 accomplishes projects that the government shares or royalties collected in the exploration, development and production of indigenous energy sources, like natural gas, shall be reduced to 1 percent of net proceeds levied on generation companies.

RP urged to consider nuclear option

THE PHILIPPINES SHOULD "JUMP start" its power industry to avoid being left behind by its neighboring countries in terms of ensuring industry competitiveness and adequate energy supply, unless it starts considering nuclear power as an alternative energy source, said a Duma expert.

"The Philippines cannot avoid nuclear energy. All countries in East Asia will go into nuclear energy eventually ... as gas and oil will run out in the middle of the century when population peaks. There is no other alternative," said Isa G. McKinley of MetroVideo Consulting.

McKinley stressed that if donors to be safe, the Philippines should start operating the mothballed 630-megawatt Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP) as soon as possible.

And by safe, McKinley said, he means that the BNPP should not be seeing directly on top of an active fault line and that the government should be able to "bring the plant up to modern levels of seismic safety."

According to McKinley, the Philippines even has an advantage over other countries in Asia, which are only starting to consider the nuclear option, in that it already has the BNPP.

The facility can start operations in a couple of years' time. The government only needs to upgrade the plant's systems prior to commercial operations, he added.

Put up in 1980s, the BNPP is the country's first and only nuclear power plant. It was not allowed to operate because of various concerns on safety, disposal of nuclear wastes as well as charges on project overruns and alleged irregularities in acquisition from various military and environment groups.

Early this year, however, Congressman Rep. Mark Cojuangco sought to revive the 22-year-old white elephant, at the cost of another P1 billion, with his bill, the "Bataan Nuclear Power Plant Commissioning Act of 2008."

According to Energy Secretary Angelo T. Reyes, the Philippines is still not ready for nuclear power because it lacks the necessary legal, human, regulatory, physical and financial infrastructures and stakeholders' support.

He said though that the government would still keep nuclear power as an energy option since it has been proven to provide "steady, cheap, quality power over a long period." Arra B. Rivera

Measure may help stabilize market prices

By Michelle V. Baron

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas has again pushed its proposal to buy and sell its own bonds, saying this would enable it to better help the economy deal with a crisis.

The BSP has been calling for amendments to its charter so that it would operate a program allowing the monetary authority to buy and sell its own bonds in the domestic market. Monetary officials said the BSP might be the only central bank in the world that could set trade its own bonds.

Currently, the BSP uses government securities for its open market operations. The BSP mandated to manage liquidity in the economy and maintain price stability, buys and sells bonds as a way to fulfill these mandates.

The BSP buys bonds when it intends to inject more cash into the system to help spur economic activity. It sells bonds when it wants to siphon off excess liquidity in the economy that is causing too much demand for goods and services, thus accelerating inflation beyond target levels.

"The central bank's ability to issue its own bonds provides an added tool to deal with challenges of pursuing its price stability mandate," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said.

Also in 1993, the old Central Bank of the Philippines was free to buy and sell its own bonds. However, Congress stripped the monetary authority of such power when the New Central Bank Act of 1993 took effect. Legislators believed that the old central bank's power to issue its own bonds was abused, as heavy bond sale led to enormous inflation levels and bloated debts of the monetary authority.

The BSP was created to replace the old one, which was believed to be ineffective in carrying out its mandate.

5-yr T-bond yield down 8.5 bps

By Roonel W. Dumlao

THE INTEREST RATES ON FIVE-YEAR TREASURY bonds dropped by 8.5 basis points to 6.893 percent as the government enjoyed an easing of the inflation rate in a 22-year low of 1.1 percent in June.

Yesterday's T-bond issue was twice-oversubscribed as buyers snubbed a total of P19.65 billion against the Bureau of the Treasury's offer of P8.5 billion, which the BTr awarded fully.

The latest float is a reissue of the bonds floated on six months ago and will mature on Jan. 27, 2014.

In an interview, National Treasurer Roberto B. Tan said the decline in the yield was as it down to a "very liquid" capital market.

Tan said government debt paper worth P30.6 billion were maturing this week.

In a related development, an increasing budget deficit and higher losses by state firms this year are expected to swing the consolidated public sector financial position to a deficit of P222.90 billion this year from a surplus of P132.3 billion in 2008.

Data from the Department of Finance show that the public sector deficit would be incurred mainly due to a projected P658-billion overhead spending based on the latest fiscal program.

Based on the Department of Budget and Management's original budget of expenditures and sources of financing (BESF) for 2009, the government was supposed to incur a deficit of only P40 billion, but this has since been revised upward four times because of the economic slowdown in the country.

The entire public sector refers to the national government, local government units (LGUs), government financial institutions, social security institutions (SSIs) and state universities.

SSIs include the Government Service Insurance System, Social Security System and the Philippine Health Insurance Corp.

PNB drops bid to acquire PBCom

Turn to page B-3

Philcom reneged in 2006 a deal to buy out the 38.26 percent combined stake held by the Sobbis and Cheng families in PBCom, equivalent to 330.38 million shares for P9.6 billion. But the agreement left out the single biggest voting block with a 27 percent stake in PBCom, the Lee family. The Sobbis own about 28 percent and the Chengs, 18 percent of the bank.

In 2004, when PHC extended a P5.6-billion financial package to PBCom, the shareholders were obliged to divest absolute control of the bank, or at least 67 percent, in favor of a new investor within five years.

PBCom was even required to give PHC a special power of attorney so that the latter could enforce the sale of shares if the bank's shareholders would not be able to do so within the agreed time.

But since the combined stake committed by the Sobbis and Chengs in Philcom fell short of the 67 percent requirement set by PHC, the parties were not able to consummate the deal.

PNB and the major shareholders of PBCom have supported investment bank Macquarie to manage the sale.

PBCom ranks 19th biggest out of the Philippines' 38 operating commercial banks.

Board of WESM operator restructured

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND IT had restructured the board of Philippine Electricity Market Corp. to reflect "equitable representation from each sector of the electric power industry."

PEMC, which oversees the operations of the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM), said the move would pave the way for a smooth transition toward the establishment of an independent Market Operator (IMO).

Philippine Independent Power Producers Association (Pippa) said the creation of an IMO was long overdue. It said this was supposed to happen a year after commercial operations of WESM started—as specified under the Electric Power Reform Industry Act of 2001.

WESM started commercial operations in 2006. Under the Opisc Law, the IMO should have been established the following year. Amy R. Remo

HPI expands Tagaytay dev't

New upscale property extends up to Canlubang

By Doris C. Dantao

RETAIL TYCOON HENRY SYS UP-scale property arm Highlands Prime Inc. (HPI) has expanded development of its flagship Tagaytay project with the purchase of a 342-hectare property in Canlubang, Laguna.

The property—a new high-end residential development adjacent to the Canlubang Golf Club—extends to HPI's Hillside Village within the exclusive mountain resort, Tagaytay Highlands, the company disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday.

"HPI's new acquisition in Canlubang marks a new milestone in the company's future thrust in diversify its product offerings. Investments of this property will further enhance the profitability of HPI and strengthen its position as a major player in the property market," HPI president Antonio Horacio said.

"The property is conducive to the type of upscale development that HPI does, given its scenic location as it overlooks natural tourist attractions such as Laguna de Bay and Mt. Makiling, among others. HPI intends to develop the property into ... an ecology-friendly community that offers high-end homes and commercial centers with world-class amenities," he added.

HPI is now shortlisting foreign and local firms, which could be tapped to draft the master plan for the project. The initial phase of the project is expected to be launched by the end of this year.

The developer is also continuing the development of residential communities inside the Tagaytay Highlands and the Midlands complex on the property spun off by leisure resort developer Belle Corp.

Expected to be launched shortly are Phase 2 of The Woodridge Place townhouse and four-bedroom mansions; Phase 1 of The Horizon at Tagaytay Midlands, which covers the construction and sale of two- to three-bedroom townhouses; the E. Piazza at Milano, an Italian style complex that overlooks the famed Taal Volcano; and The Cliff at Hillside, a mid-rise condominium project.

Yehey! sees itself back in the black

ONLINE SOLUTIONS PROVIDER Yehey! Corp., a unit of publicly listed Vantage Equities Inc., is expected to revive back to profitability this year on the back of strong growth of its web-based and digital marketing businesses.

While its first quarter performance was "dismal" due to its restructuring, Yehey! said in a statement yesterday that a number of recent initiatives had strengthened its fundamentals. It registered a net loss of P7.4 million in the first three months compared to a net income of P2.8 million a year ago.

"Outlook for 2009 remains positive as Yehey! is looking at another double-digit topline (revenue) growth and, this time, turning back the company towards the black," the company said.

The disclosure noted that flagship website Yehey.com would be repositioned as a search engine, as three new websites were introduced into the market: Pinoylistyo.com, Sick.ph and Bersalia.ph.

On Yehey's digital marketing arm, it is moving up the value chain...from creating and deploying websites, to now working on digital marketing projects for corporate clients and advertisers with services such as online media planning, blogger management, online reputation management, among others.

Yehey's revenue surged to P84.3 million last year from P43.3 million in 2007. However, it incurred a net loss of P5 million for 2008, a turnaround from the P4.5 million net profit a year ago. The losses were attributed to heavy investments in hardware and manpower talent and training.

Doris C. Dantao

TVIRD expects to earn $4.5M from latest copper shipment

By Abigail L. Ho

TVI RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT Philippines Inc. (TVIRD), the local affiliate of Canadian mining firm TVI Pacific Inc., generated $4.49 million in additional revenue from its fourth shipment of copper concentrates.

In a statement posted on the company's website, TVI Resource said the delivery, still under no-offtake agreement with MRI Trading AG, was completed last Thursday.

The shipment involved 5,202 dry metric tons (DMT) of copper concentrates worth more than $5 million.

The initial payment for the shipment, which TVIRD has yet to receive, represents 90 percent of the initial estimated value of the cargo, less applicable deductions.

Under the TVIRD-MRI offtake agreement, "the final payment for the remaining sale price of the concentrates is due once the final details relating to the weight, assays and prices are determined."

As with earnings from the first three copper concentrates shipments, TVIRD said it would use proceeds from the fourth delivery to fund working capital and debt service.

The company's Canatuan mine in Zamboanga del Norte has so far produced around 20,200 DMT of copper concentrates. Of the total, 10,124 DMT had been shipped in accordance with TVIRD's offtake deal with MRI.

Trading final assay tests and prices, the past four shipments had so far generated around $11 million in revenue for TVIRD.

Subic seaport revenue up

REVENUE GENERATED BY SEAport operations in Subic Freeport has exceeded projections despite the global crisis, officials of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority said.

In a statement, SBMA seaport manager Herbert Bautista said seaport operations in the first six months this year hit P270.47 million, up slightly from the P256.28 million posted a year ago.

"In June alone, the SBMA seaport department recorded an income of P60.69 million, the highest monthly revenue recorded in the last five years," he said.

Bautista said through aggressive marketing, income from Subic's seaport had been on an upward trend since 2005, with a 5.41 percent growth recorded in 2006, 14.25 percent in 2007, and 26.63 percent in 2008.

Seaport revenue was derived from vessel and cargo charges, lease or rentals, processing fees, SBMA shares from joint ventures and other billings for port users.

For the first semester of this year, the bulk of seaport revenue came from vessel charges, totaling P132.11 million.

The SBMA seaport department has projected revenue forecasts for 2009 at P516.3 million.

Among the factors that contributed to this year's revenue growth were the operation of Subic's New Container Terminal 1 (NCT-1) by the Subic Bay International Terminal Corp., income from vessel charges and wharfage for petroleum products, fertilizer, and grains. Robert Ermoga, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Philippine Stock Exchange

As of July 7, 2009

Currencies

July 7, 2009 Country	Unit	Peso Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
Japan	Yen	0.4911	0.010000	20.3622
Europe	Euro	0.0000	0.000000	0.0000
United Kingdom	Pound	1.6427	0.708000	1.4119
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.1292	0.138000	7.7419
Taiwan	Dollar	0.0000	0.000000	0.0000
Switzerland	Franc	0.4511	0.707000	1.4154
Canada	Dollar	0.0000	0.000000	0.0000
Singapore	Dollar	0.0000	0.000000	0.0000
Australia	Dollar	0.0000	0.000000	0.0000
Bahrain	Dinar	0.0000	0.000000	0.0000
Saudi Arabia	Riyal	0.0000	0.000000	0.0000
Brunei	Dollar	0.0000	0.000000	0.0000
Kuwait	Dinar	0.0000	0.000000	0.0000
Thailand	Baht	0.0000	0.000000	0.0000
UAE	Dirham	0.0000	0.000000	0.0000
Qatar	Riyal	0.0000	0.000000	0.0000
Korea	Won	0.0000	0.000000	0.0000
China	Yuan	0.0000	0.000000	0.0000
Denmark	Krone	0.0000	0.000000	0.0000
India	Rupee	0.0000	0.000000	0.0000
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.0000	0.000000	0.0000
New Zealand	Dollar	0.0000	0.000000	0.0000
Sweden	Krona	0.0000	0.000000	0.0000
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.0000	0.000000	0.0000

Off the shelves, off the air

IT'S NOT ONLY ON the supermarket shelves that Colgate toothpaste and Palmolive shampoos are missing these days.

Ariel Saparollya viewers have not seen Colgate and Palmolive commercials since April this year over a pricing disagreement with broadcasting giant ABS-CBN.

Colgate, on the other hand, has found solace in ABS-CBN's rival, GMA Network, in its three networks' squabble over TV ratings, that's another long-running juicy story.

Darla C. Bautista

The 20-percent hurdle

ASIDE FROM meeting blanks in the PLDT Beneficial Trust's coach talked about acquisition of the country's third biggest telco Philippine Star, according to the prospectus. In PLDT chair Manuel V. Pangilinan's inheritance to lay down more than a 26-percent down payment relative to the P4 billion proposed transaction.

MVP, for his part, had said that every negotiation was always just as tough, but he was still targeting to close a deal by July or August.

Darla C. Bautista

Hello Richville

ONE INTERESTING tidbit that went around these past few days was the rumor about Ana Miguel Beverly's supposedly rich payoff in boxing champion Manny Pacquiao for his string of television contract side for the best guest.

According to the rumor, Pacquiao was in have received as payment a huge Emmanelan Village property along Palm Avenue, one of the wealthy worker's two main thoroughfares.

According to our source, the property was once owned by the prominent Ancher Sam. boasting before it was acquired by United Coconut Planters Bank some years back. Pesos (CPB). It's easy to see how it would lord on the queen's lap via San Miguel.

Another source said the property (about 3,000 square meters) has been on the selling block for many years, with no takers owing to its hefty price. Supposedly, however, it was sold recently for a mere P100 million (pressers orally, given Pacquiao's estimated current net worth of about P1.3 billion).

One ranking San Miguel official has already denied the rumor, but Pacquiao's would-be Llanos neighbors are still managing conversation about the prospect of going to Lucky Man with Sling Homies.

Dustin L. Lucas

Rubber stamp no more

LORD ACCOUTREMES is touting the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas as a rubber stamp when foreign loan approvals are concerned, the national government recently received an unanimous surprise when its application for a $1-billion global bond issue was sent back with a "needs more work" note attached to it (figuratively, of course).

The Bangko Sentral is required by law to review and approve (or disapprove) all foreign loans whether from the public or private sector, as a result of the bank's heavier hand in the 1980s that caused the country's infamous debt moratorium.

For the first time in a very long while, however, the Bangko Sentral found its motion out and delivered the approval of the national government's bond issue, taking some finance department officials by surprise.

Observers couldn't help but speculate about the central bank's newfound monetary and fiscal authorities over the latter's failure to honor the promise to infuse P40 billion in capital to the BSP ... all while administration allies are free rein to pursue an central bank officials during Congress investigations.

And while the Bangko Sentral declared about P5 billion in dividends this year, an overzealous auditor has yet to publish the turnover (which has yet to happen), unlike what has been the tradition over the years.

National government officials, on the other hand, are pretending not to notice with their best "peep nuthin" faces.

Dustin L. Lucas

Junk bonds, anyone?

SPEAKING OF capital, our inside supposedly prepared by the national government for the Bangko Sentral's recapitalization is for the creation a special purpose vehicle that will raise the funds from the debt market.

The funds raised (presumably about P40 billion) will then be used as the central bank's capital.... whatever that is in relation to the Tier 2 capital method used by capital-deficient banks to shore up their balance sheets.

The BSP supposedly balked, however, when told that the SPV will bank up its debt issue with yet-unknown assets that the government may infuse into it to make future close. The scheme would have basically recapitalized the BSP with what it left would be junk bonds.

Dustin L. Lucas

Forex reserves hit new high of $39.6B

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE COUNTRY'S FOREIGN CURRENCY RESERVES, which determines the Philippines' ability to service its obligations and engage in commercial transactions with the rest of the world, registered a new historic high of $39.6 billion as of end-June.

Armando Ingeles, deputy governor of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, said yesterday in a statement that the latest gross international reserves (GIR) level was enough to cover 8.6 months' worth of imported goods and payment of services.

The BSP credited the increase to the GIR, which stood at $39.59 billion in May and $39.3 billion in April, to the increase in foreign currency-denominated deposits by the national government and the central bank's income from its investment abroad.

The positive impact of the additional government deposits and BSP investment was only partially offset by the withdrawals by the national government to pay for maturing foreign currency-denominated obligations and the decline in gold prices.

The country's GIR is also composed of the country's gold holdings. About 74 percent of the country's GIR are in US dollars.

The BSP also reported that the country's net international reserves (NIR), the difference between the GIR and the central bank's short-term liabilities, rose to $38.6 billion as of end-June from $38.1 billion in end-May.

Earlier, BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the country's GIR was being augmented by inflows remittances from overseas Filipino workers. He said the BSP expects remittances to remain, if not surpass, last year's $16.4 billion.

The BSP has doubted projections by some economists that remittances would drop this year because of the job cuts in some countries that offered Filipinos. The BSP said new alternative labor markets abroad have opened—such as Canada, Australia, Qatar...and there was a high demand for Filipinos among foreign employers.

Inflation drops to 22-year low ... Front page B1

data gave the central bank room to lower rates again after slashing them by a total of 1.75-percentage points since December.

He also informed consumers he made on Friday that the BSP was studying when to join other policymakers around the world who have joined in their monetary-easing campaign as financial markets and the global economy show signs of stabilizing.

"We are mindful of global and domestic financial and real sector developments, particularly the actions of central banks in the major economies to unwind prior liquidity and credit-easing measures," Tetangco said.

Some analysts said the central bank may choose to reduce policy rates to help boost the economy in the absence of further rate cuts.

The government has lowered its growth target this year to 0.6-1.6 percent from 2.1-4.1 percent after disappointing first-quarter growth as the global financial crisis battered Asian economies.

The central bank expects inflation to hit bottom in the third quarter at around 1 percent and pick up in the following months to reach an average 3.4 percent by the end of the year, within the government's official target of 2.5-4.5 percent.

In its latest report on the CPI, the National Statistics Office said the average inflation for the first half of 2009 ratcheted at 3 percent.

This was ahead half of the 9.3 percent posted in 2008 and, according to Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Ralph G. Recto, "slightly lower" than the government's target for this year of between 2.3 percent and 3.3 percent.

"Rice, corn, fuel and electricity in June were generally less expensive compared to the same months last year," said Recto, who is also director general of the National Economic and Development Authority.

He added that fuel prices reflected lethargic demand, with domestic prices falling from year-ago levels as Dubai oil price dipped to $60.40 a barrel in June from $127.83 last year.

"Electricity rates also declined as government-owned Transco [Transmission Corp.] lowered June [last year] to P4.20 in June 2009," Recto said.

With a report from Reuters

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40-49	5,961.00	11,922.00	17,883.00	23,844.00	29,805.00
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MOTORING

RANGER VS NAVARA 4X2 AT

The ride reveals distinct strengths

THE HILUX (corner of the view is the Ranger (left), with the higher ground clearance and the tapered front, which is aerodynamic as it sweeps rearward at the edges to incorporate its build from wheel arches.

NAVARA. Driver and co-driver are like a car, the rigid body design has an H-crossmember chassis.

By Tess R. Salazar
tsrefit.corbz

ENOUGH WITH HISTORY. The past can only take you so far. It's the now that will take you places. So, putting heritages aside, we put two of the most prominent rivals (so far) to their paces—the Ford Ranger Trekker 4x2 AT and the Nissan Navara 4x2 AT.

As it is worth noting that the Navara is slightly more expensive—at P1.141 million—than the Ranger (P1.078 million), that claim/entry doesn't necessarily end there.

Based on a weekend drive to the far north with full loads of passengers and luggage, the Navara provided more passengers' leg room especially at the back (though a six-foot front passenger found the Navara's bulky glove compartment creating more of a stuffing experience compared to the Ranger). It is also slightly wider and has a lower ground clearance.

With lower ground clearance, the Navara did feel more stable on the road during the 13-hour drive. Some passengers felt they were on a sedan rather than a pickup. The A/T gearing also felt smoother during shifting. The shorter gear ratio translated to less effort on the part of the engine.

Though the Navara is 10 kg heavier (curb weight is 1,720 kg vs Ranger's 1,695 kg), its longer (more flexible) power band enables it to accelerate faster. However, the Ranger's final gear drive is higher, which would, to a long listing hack "balance to the force" at high speeds.

These driving observations were confirmed in subsequent power graph analyses of the two pickups, and the gear ratio computations from first to final drive. It would be worth taking note that both pickups run by drive-by-wire, meaning that throttle response is not direct and has its own thorough the computer, which in turn will distance how the vehicle's response should be.

The Navara's rigid body design is able to incorporate an H-crossmember chassis (of a ladder-type frame design) compared to a usual pickup's role.

Ground clearance

But as the Navara keeps low, the taller Ranger accords the driver a better view of the road, which is ideal if you have to drive through floods or not on the highway or country roads. For a higher vehicle, the Ranger manages precise, consistent handling, and with a tight suspension, the vehicle will do exactly what you want it to do.

The Ranger provides dual-stage SRS front driver and 7SR passenger airbags to protect the driver and front passenger from frontal impact. It comes with a 4W ABS/EBD for optimal brake force distribution, enabling stable braking performance even under heavy loads. The Ranger's aerodynamic engine room and fuel tank corrosion protection (Galfanneal/Duo-PVC) "enables severe weather conditions," according to its manufacturers.

It's in the external design where the biggest differences lie, and the most subjective decisions are made. Some would prefer the no-nonsense, sturdy look of the Navara, while others would vote for the Ranger's more "suave" look, especially with the front design. There's a purpose for the Ranger's new front design, as the front grille drivers air when it is highly needed—it aid in efficient air-conditioning performance and engine cooling by the turbocharged TDCI during hot weather.

The Ranger's interior color is also segmented forward of the cockpit, directly in the flow of cool air. Its lower facets included integrated eyebrow shapes for fog lamps and subtle features influenced by aerodynamic testing. The side mirror design is a product of astounding, despite their large size (which is great for drivers to improve their lateral line of sight), the side mirrors are sleek and allow the wind to flow past without creating turbulence and wind noise.

Trial. The maintenance luggage—the costs and below's of owning either

In Formula One, the turf war continues

ON THE ROAD

Atoki Servillo Mendoza

IN THE WORLD'S RICHEST and most suddenly televised motor sport, political gamesmanship and power struggles are part of the competition. The infighting within Formula One pushed last month when eight of the 10 teams, protesting a budget cap to be imposed on them by the International Automobile Federation (FIA), the sport's governing body, threatened to form a rival series in 2010. Aside from the spending limits, the teams had been disagreeing through the years with Max Mosley, the FIA president, over new rules set by the FIA without consulting them.

The departures of the eight—Ferrari, Mercedes McLaren, BMW-Sauber, Renault, Toyota, Honda, Red Bull Racing and Toro Rosso—under the aegis of the Formula One Teams Association (Fota) could negate the collapse of Formula One as only two teams—Williams and Force India—would be left. Although they will be joined by three new teams—Team USF1, Manor F1 Team and Campos Racing—the lackluster lineup may not assuage concerns over the series' lucrative TV franchise alive, especially in the current global economic crisis.

Mosley spent time all over the world—therefore boasted a collective sigh of relief when news unwinding reported last June 25 that the FIA, led by Mosley and Fota, led by Ferrari president Luca Cordero di Montezemolo, had reached a settlement in Paris. Under the peace pact, the rebel teams agreed to race in F1 until the end of 2012 and reduce costs within two years while the car manufacturer teams will provide technical assistance to the new teams for 2010.

Reelection

If this looks like a victory for Mosley, wait: The Wall Street Journal reported that as part of the agreement, Mosley will not stand for reelection in October as FIA president. You may recall that in March 2008, several of the 45 teams and the automobile associations of the United States, Germany and the Netherlands demanded Mosley's resignation after a British newspaper published the sassy and videos of his involvement in a sex orgy with prostitutes inside a private London club.

However, Mosley then 68, reportedly used the newspaper for invasion of privacy and survived the crisis by winning the support (103 votes to 55) of smaller automobile associations worldwide for him to stay on as FIA president until the October 2009 general assembly.

Now, it looks like Mosley has shifted gears. Judging from a letter he sent to Fota president di Montezemolo on June 25, Mosley is on the warpath anew. He begins by reminding di Montezemolo that a fundamental part of their deal "was that we would both present a positive and truthful account to the media. I was therefore astonished to learn that Fota has been briefing the press that Mr. Bord had taken charge of Formula One, something which you know is completely untrue, that I had been forced out of office, into Cube, and, apparently, that I would have no role in the FIA after October, something which is plain nonsense, if only because of the FIA statutes."

Dictator

"Furthermore, you have suggested to the media that I was a 'dictator' on occasions which is grossly insulting to the 26 members of the World Motor Sport Council who have discussed and voted all the rules and procedures of Formula One since the 1980s, not to mention the representatives of the FIA's 122 countries who have democratically endorsed everything I and my World Motor Sport Council colleagues have done during the last 18 years."

Mosley then demanded that Fota rectify its false statements, make no further statements and issue a suitable apology as the Fota press conference "if you wish the agreement we made to have any chance of survival." He added that there was no need for him to involve himself further in Fota since they had a settlement and that equally, he had a long-standing plan not to seek reelection in October and that he had confirmed both points to Fota.

"However," Mosley wrote, "given your and Fota's deliberate attempts to mislead the media, I now consider my options open. At least until October, I am president of the FIA with the full authority of the office. After that it is the FIA member clubs, not you or Fota, who will decide on the future leadership of the FIA."

So far, di Montezemolo as Fota chief has not issued a correction or apology. Monitor-able, some of the FIA members claim in Europe is considering a letter for the presidency of other member clubs to sign boosting Mosley as not for reelection this October. And so the turf war in Formula One continues with control of this prestigious, billion-dollar sport at stake.

RP CUSTOMER SERVICE SATISFACTION STUDY

Honda, Mitsubishi rank highest in a tie

HONDA AND MITSUBISHI RANK HIGHEST in terms of customer satisfaction with authorized dealer after-sales service, according to the J.D. Power Asia Pacific 2009 Philippines Customer Service Index study released today.

The study, now in its ninth year and redesigned for 2009, measures customer satisfaction with authorized dealer after-sales service in the Philippines by examining five key factors: service quality; vehicle pickup; service initiation; service advisor; and service facility. Customer service performance is reported in an index score based on a 1,000-point scale.

A tie

Among the 11 manufacturers included in the study, Honda and Mitsubishi rank highest, each receiving a score of 814. Honda performs particularly well in the vehicle pickup, service initiation, service advisor and service facility factors. Mitsubishi performs particularly well in service quality, which has the greatest impact on overall customer service satisfaction. Nissan ranks third with a score of 810, followed by Kia, Mazda and Toyota, respectively.

The study identifies 11 dealer practices that enhance the service experience for customers. These procedures can range from the comfort level of the service facility's appearance of operating hours and after-sales service to the advisor's overall competency in scheduling and communication.

The study also reveals that customer satisfaction levels are high when dealers perform at least 19 of the 22 service-standard procedures. Satisfaction scores fall below average for manufacturers whose dealerships failed to meet 19 standards.

In addition, satisfaction is lowest among customers whose dealer performed 14 or fewer standards. These customers have an average index score of 677, which is 123 points below the industry average. Conversely, among customers receiving at least 21 standards, the average score is 832—98 points above the industry average. In 2009, only 30 percent of customers report that their dealer performed at least 21 standards during their past service visit.

"The low percentage of customers receiving at least 21 standards is clear evidence that dealers have much room for improvement," said Ishu Kimoto, general manager for the Philippines at J.D. Power Asia Pacific, Singapore. "Maintaining a high rate of implementation for these standards is the key to delighting customers."

Additionally, the standard operating procedures that have the most considerable difference in performance by manufacturers are related to communication.

"The customer service experience is not limited to customer visits for routine maintenance," Kimoto said. "Proactively staying in touch with customers is a great opportunity for dealers to make a lasting impression and to sustain customer loyalty."

Highly satisfied

The study also finds that customers who are highly satisfied (satisfaction scores average 872 or higher) have the highest levels of advocacy and loyalty to both the vehicle brand and dealer. Nearly 76 percent of customers who report that they are highly satisfied with their dealer's service performance say they "definitely will" return the dealer for post-warranty service, compared with the industry average of 51 percent.

Additionally, 67 percent of highly satisfied customers say they "definitely will" purchase their next vehicle from the service dealer, compared with the industry average of only 44 percent.

Perception changing car

By Charles E. Bubar

IN THE 1980S, IT MUST HAVE been a stronger sight seeing those four-wheeled contraptions moving around city streets.

Back then horses and horse-drawn carriages ruled the streets and these "horseless carriages" were regarded as sheer science projects.

We might feel the same thing now that Toyota has started making their Prius available to our markets.

The Prius, of course, is Toyota's—and the world's—first mass-produced hybrid vehicle, meaning it runs on both a gasoline-powered internal combustion engine and an electric motor.

When its system is switched to electric mode, the vehicle could give zero emissions performance for up to two kilometers at speeds up to 50 kph.

And even when it's gasoline-engine engaged, the Prius' CO2 emissions is below 100 g/km, thus, meeting Euro 5 emissions standards for even Euro 6's requirements.

Fuel consumption

What should interest us more is the fact that it could achieve a fuel consumption of around 31 km per liter (the record is 38 km/l) while providing power similar to cars with a 2.4-liter engine or 3-liter a 1.6 engine displacement.

That is nothing short of astounding for a car that will make like a five-seater family hatchback.

But it must have been a different experience driving a Prius.

This is because the Prius is extremely quiet, with only the whine of the battery to keep you company at slow speeds.

This a great indeed, although the idea of silent driving means the Prius driver has to be extra vigilant for pedestrians who may not be able to notice that you are coming behind them.

Indeed, the Prius is one high-tech science project that will soon change our perspective about vehicles.

This is the car that will soon point the way to roads and streets that will no longer be a source of global-warming pollution.

TOYOTA Motor Philippines executives (from left) Raymund Rodriguez, Yuji Goto, Hiroshi Ito, David Go, and Daniel Isla have the new Prius.

BUSINESS

Asean group backs regional power grid initiative

Scheme to ensure sustainability of supply

By Arra B. Reroz

POWER UTILITIES IN THE ASSOCIATION of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) are pushing the development of an Asean Power Grid, in view of the global financial crisis and its impact on Southeast Asian economies.

In a joint statement posted on National Power Corp.'s website, the 25th Heads of Asean Power Utilities/Authorities (Hapua) Council said it was supporting the Asean governments' goal of having a regional power grid to ensure the sustainability and security of power supply and promote electricity trade among member countries.

The Hapua Council noted that the global financial meltdown had resulted to "lagging energy sales which, in turn, spelled considerable revenue losses for most Asean electric utilities."

"[That], for the first time on the agenda of Hapua continues to be the development of a platform towards the realization of an Asean Power Grid," it added.

To achieve this, the council said it was considering implementing all Hapua bilateral and multilateral interconnection projects by 2015.

PERLAS A. TAMPOCO

It also targets to complete the Asean Interconnection Master Plan Study and studies to interconnect Asean—all aimed at developing harmonized legal and regulatory frameworks, standards and codes, and commercial arrangements.

"The operation of an Asean Power Grid rests not only on infrastructure, but also on the harmonization of regional regulatory regimes," it said.

"Therefore, the council seeks greater support and assistance of the governments of member-states in the timely execution of the initiatives stated in the Memorandum of Understanding on the Asean Power Grid, particularly on a cohesive basis," it added.

The Hapua members count on are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The 25th Hapua Council meeting held last month was formally opened by National Power Corp. president Perlas A. Tampoco, as the outgoing chair of the Council.

In his opening remarks, Tampoco expressed confidence that Hapua members would be able to attain their vision of an Asean Power Grid.

"Knowing the utilities, the level of expertise and the commitment of the people here today, I believe that the task would be fairly easy, especially as we share a common vision of furthering our ties, strengthening our bonds and creating avenues for us to work together in the context and spirit of the Asean," Tampoco said.

Exports to Taiwan plunge 50%

By Abigail L. Ho

THE VALUE OF GOODS SHIPPED TO Taiwan from the Philippines fell 50.3 percent in the first four months, to $980.3 million from $795.9 million in the same period a year ago.

Data from Taiwan's Ministry of Economic Affairs showed that Taiwan exports to the country also slumped 38.2 percent, from last year's $1.8 billion to less than $1.1 billion from January to April this year.

Total trade between Taiwan and the Philippines likewise declined to almost $1.5 billion in the first four months, 41.8 percent lower than the $2.5 billion posted for the same period in 2008.

Despite this, Taiwan still managed to register a trade surplus of $748.3 million, 28.9 percent lower than the $1.0 billion surplus it was able to chalk up the year before.

With these export and import figures, the Philippines maintained its position as Taiwan's 14th largest trading partner in the world, with a 1.45-percent share of overall trade.

Exports-wise, the Philippines was Taiwan's 20th largest in the first four months, accounting for 0.85 percent of total goods shipped to Taiwan during the period.

In terms of imports, Taiwan contributed almost 2 percent of Philippine imports, making it the country's 10th biggest exporter of goods.

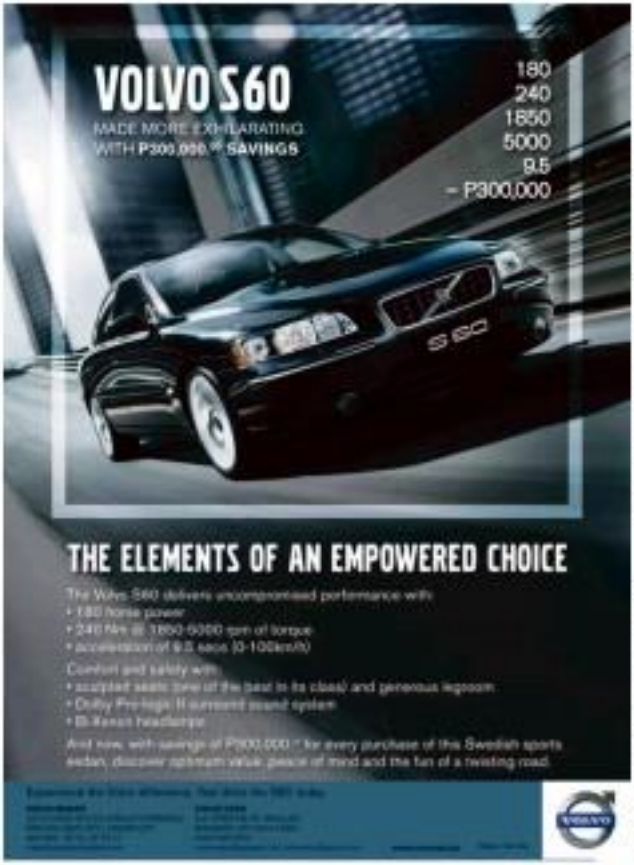
China continued to be Taiwan's biggest trading partner worldwide, accounting for more than 20.6 percent of overall trade in the January-April period.

Trade between the Philippines and Taiwan had been on a downward trend since the start of the year.

In the first quarter, Philippine exports to Taiwan plunged 53.8 percent to $270.2 million, from $584.9 million in the same period a year ago.

Philippine imports from Taiwan, on the other hand, dipped 46.5 percent to $810.4 million, from close to $1.4 billion last year.

Total trade between Taiwan and the Philippines was placed at close to $1.1 billion in the first three months, a 44.5-percent drop from the $1.9 billion registered in the same period in 2008.



Makers of steel angles seek higher safeguards

THE STEEL ANGLES, SHAPES and Section Manufacturers Association of the Philippines (Samasteel) wants the safeguard duty on steel angle bars set at P34,000 per ton.

The amount is almost double the P7,700 per ton safeguard duty recommended by the Committee on Tariff Commission.

Samasteel spokesperson Alex Tiani said the group would not make additional comments on the recommendation until its own review of the computation made by the technical experts at the Tariff Commission is completed.

He said the Tariff Commission's computation is not supposed to be based on the average differences between the landed price of imported steel angles and the production costs of local producers over the last four years.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has 15 days to act on the Tariff Commission's recommendations.

In making its decision, Federation of Philippine Industries president Jesus Arranza urged the DTI to consider other developments in the market, particularly in China.

He was particularly referring to the Chinese government's 17-percent rebate program for steel exporters.

This large subsidy for Chinese steel manufacturers, he said, posed a huge threat to domestic producers as Chinese steel imports would end up being even a lot cheaper than they already were.

"The local industry feels that this is another handwriting on the wall that there would be years of dumping in the near future because of the depressed markets. We should be ready for now so we will not be caught flat-footed and then just come up with our delayed remedies when the ship has already happened," he said.

"We are hoping that Trade Secretary Peter Favila will take into consideration the 17-percent rebate program of China, which we believe will eventually include steel angle bars in the near future," he added, ahead of a meeting that the group would have with Favila this week.

GOINGS-ON

Philex mine output hits P895M

PUBLICLY LISTED PHILEX MINING CORP. (SEC: PX; PHOSL; MINE DEPARTMENT) almost 30% (100 by metric tons (DMT) in June, valued at P895 million.

In a disclosure, Philex said it shipped out 130,611 DMT of ore containing gold, copper and silver.

Based on prevailing metal prices, the unit containing gold was valued at P504 million, copper at P363 million and silver at P8 million.

Philex produced 388,874 grams or 11,198 ounces of gold for the month. The company also produced 1.4 million kilograms or 3.2 million pounds of copper and 392,842 grams or 11,344 ounces of silver. *Ilya J. Mizhusher*

Rise in hybrid rice sale seen

HYBRID RICE PRODUCER SL AGRITECH IS PROJECTING A 66-PERCENT increase in sales of hybrid rice seed in 2009, an executive said.

Henry Lee Hun Leong said target sales for seeds in the calendar June 2008 to May 2009 would be 500 million—up from P300 million the previous year.

By 2010, the company hopes to earn P1.2 billion in net sales, said Hendy Setiawan, seeds and sales vice.

The company is now exporting its products to Indonesia and Nigeria. It said it was also in Canada to begin production after sealing an agreement with the government there. Later, it hopes to do business in Vietnam. *Mikee T. Cabuenas*

Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan Contributing Editor Gia S. Bernardo

LIFESTYLE Parenting

My father, the fisherman

I never sang a song for him

THE AUTHOR (second from left) with her father Restituto Laggunoy, sister Zenaida and brother Felino during her college graduation in 1968

TOY REVIEW

Chocolate, trains and bells

STORY ON PAGE C4

ASHAMED OF DARK UNDER-ARMS?

By Rosalia Laguesta Erinio
Contributor

IN MY YOUTH, I SAW A FILM titled "I Never Sang for my Father." It was about a 40-something man's never-ending conflict with his aging father. The story ended with the old man's death, the son deeply remorseful for not loving and understanding his father.

I somehow identify with the son's concern because I have not sung for my own father or mother.

I was young then, and the young generally have a different perspective on matters and persons they interact with, primarily their families. It is only when we grown older than our years do the thorny, winding trails of life. That's the time our appreciation the value of everything and everyone we cherish along the way.

It becomes too late to sing for them. But let me sing for my father, no matter how late it is.

My father, a fisherman, was a simple, reticent man. He was never demonstrative. He was just like everybody else's father in our coastal community: he just worked, worked and worked. He, he the current that. He shared away to give us food, clothes and shelter. He allowed us to have the kind of education he and my mother never had.

Mama and Papa drilled into our minds the need to get an education, saying it would be their only legacy. It would be one wealth that nobody could take away from us. It would also be their greatest source of fulfillment to see us stand on our own. At the same time, our being educated and getting good jobs would vindicate Papa because nobody believed that anyone in our community of mostly marginal fishermen and farmers could finish college.

So Papa, the fisherman, stood as rock and how and as our baby stood.

Papa had only one thing in mind: to be out to sea as early as possible so as not to be left behind by his fellow fishermen. He did not want others to deprive him of his favorite fishing grounds. He didn't want others to take advantage of him. Unschooled as he was, Papa believed in the Golden Rule. He instilled the same in us, he was our perfect example.

He would pull his boat to the water, settle on his thwart, and soon he would be on his way to his turf, the wide, deep blue Sorsogon Bay.

I could imagine the merciless sun pounding on his back covered only with an old shirt. But he would not have minded it a bit. He would be more concerned with his fitted heavy-mesh nets, and our morning milk fish.

I could almost see a contented smile on his face—wrinkled and sun-baked, salty and weather-beaten. Soon Papa would be paddling home at last as his calloused hands would allow the sea-hares would vanish as soon as he sees us waiting for his return.

Bountiful catch

Papa, with my grandfather who was also a seasoned fisherman, would come back with such a bounty of bagus, alumot, tilingongo (bonefish), tulalakot, "lawmanda, and other kinds of fish the local names of which I am no longer remember. There were also baby hamsilings, pagsa and shanks out of the "liwat" variety.

Ever sated banana leaf-wrapped, roasted liver seasoned with salt and calamansi? Straight from the barefooted baby boatsmiling or pagsa? I can almost taste it as I write this.

It never crossed my mind then, much less Papa's, that the fascinating would be an endangered species, as Bat Dennis, Bonggoy, would be known to those "gentle giants" of the sea.

Perhaps I could liken Papa to the hamsilings—gentle as a person, as a husband to Mama, as a father to his children, who never raised his voice or hand in anger.

This is my song for my father.

The author works at the National Housing Authority. She is a founding member of Bigkis, a life story writing group which is an affiliate of the Bugkis Writers Group. She has graduate units in Public Affairs Cooperative Development from UP Los Baños and earned her undergraduate degree in Elementary Education from Colegio de la Milagrosa in Sorsogon.

CWC chair Sol Tan-Gatue, co-chair Marissa Mendoza Pineda, Wei Ligong, Adee Briones, Malta Ambassador Nida Pera, CWC president Nonie Basilio, Shirley Uy, Chino Pasiguet and Myrna Barrozzo

NOW Organics, Lily Ashley, Yvonne Briones, Baby Antonino, Consul Helen Ong, Carrie Bautista and Rosie Amparo

NEW members Abel Sevilla, Lita del Rosario, Chini Ramirez, Mercha Pascual, membership committee co-chair Leny Hahn, president Nonie Basilio, Lolita Hilapot, Sally Maikanang, Lina Soto, Lucky Cortes, Vicky Cortezo and Dolly Borlongan

AZEAN Zabiri, Mimi Valerio, Carmen Carag and Nikki Valerio

CWC honors women of Asia in tea ceremony

CONSUL Bele Costa, Thelma Gana, Lydia Reyes, Veronica Blumberg and Rose Marie Lucero

THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S Club (CWC) recently held their first tribute to the women of Asia.

At their Annual Tea 2009 called Women of Asia Celebrating Timeless Traditions held at Manila Polo Club, CWC members and their invitees dressed in garbed in colorful Asian costumes, palangpangs. The hugely successful event, chaired by Sol Tan-Gatue with co-chairs Kim Bermarde-Lukin and Marilyn Mendoza Pineda, featured a program highlighting the elder's era ceremony "as a symbol of unity in helping the less fortunate."

Meanwhile, CWC 2009 president Nonie Basilio announced her term per project, "Vocational Scholarship Program, for the poorest of the poor, in partnership with the Don Bosco School, dahlings.

Other program highlights included an outstanding members award to Ambassador Nida Mera, inclusion of 16 members, Ruhiaan wedding dance, choir's number performance by soprano Rachelle Ermedian in the delight of guests CWC's Limited-Edition Plates, which are on sale, feature "Madonna & Child" by artist Joel Blanco.

"Now on its 88th year, the Makati Central Catholic Women's Club is one of the country's oldest charity organizations with a mission of helping the needy and less fortunate. It currently supports more than 300 charities all over the Philippines," said the hard, dedicated civic leader Sonia Lozano.

BAREN Bascone, chair Sol Tan-Gatue in Tibetan costume and also-crowned socialite Nona Lozano

FFO OCAMPO, Shizue Chou and Flypi Ocampo

SAMSUNG corporate marketing director Oliver Ellringh

ARCE Eve Cesar's Artist Arce and his fiancée Quebec's voiceover Finky Talaroc

DOREEN'S lessons Rosanna Ocampo and Marco Rodriguez

SUPER couple Jerwin Ilan Salvador and wife Princine's Style icon Cecille Zamora-Van Strazen

SAMSUNG product manager Raine Jarolina, Patrick Mauricio, Samsung product manager Mylene Gabriel, Samsung online marketing officer Stephanie Chua and Kerry Bautista

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alec Von Hagen using **WL** Photo Intuitions

fashion directors and avid readers of the country's top fashion magazines, Mega and Preview, to top us in the Samsung Ultra Touch ceremonies and vote for their favorite Style Icons.

Mega listed goddess Anne Curtis, heartthrob Sam Milby and retail princess Tanya Lim.

Preview's list included TV host Daphne Oseña Paez, fashion director Ingrid Chua-Ho and writer Cecille Zamora-Van Strazen.

Mega's nominees were athlete Chris Tiu, fashion photographer Paolo Pimentel and real-estate maverick Dindee Lim.

Party central Embassy boyfriend's at The Fort was packed with one season's fashionable set with host Marissa Gonzales welcoming us to this hip happening palangpangs. Samsung Electronics marketing and communications dynamic band Ian IBM and JC brilliant Enzo Domingo, and in a short speech, "We celebrate, together with our partners from the top fashion magazines Mega, Mewe and Preview, a new definition of style as we reveal three unique individuals who have brought style to a whole new level. They are what Samsung espouse, the perfect combination of style and technology."

Voted Mewe's Style Icon was the gorgeous and stylish Curtis, Mega's Style Icon was handsome, rich and absolutely charming athlete Tiu, and Preview's Style Icon was the hip and talented trendsetter Van Strazen. They never manage fall with confidence, style and elegance, dahlings.

Style icons Anne, Chris and Cecille definitely have substance. That's why "Samsung urges you to choose to stand out and be a style icon yourself with the Samsung Ultra Touch," dahlings.

World-class jewelry

Do you know that world-class fine jewelry Roberto Coin has presence? Well, I didn't till I was invited to the launch-cum-celebration of the Indian Festival, where Mitsubishi Card Corp. together with Boston Commercial Corp. brought in the latest from Roberto Coin, dahlings.

Some of the invitees bought jewelry pieces while others shelled out their discounts and capped-value coins.

Welcoming in was the color director of Roberto Coin for Asia-Pacific Phillip Grimes while Manila Boris Confidential performed.

"Roberto Coin is incorporating in each piece the concept of youth, serenity and happiness. Those who wear it express the true and deep meaning of life," Grimes explained, palangpangs.

Other guests were the mega movers and shakers of Mitsubishi Card Corp.

Check this out. Mitsubishi cardholders will get triple rewards points when you purchase Roberto Coin jewelry at Rustan's Department Stores from July 1-Sept. 30, palangpangs.

METROBANK Corporation Claire Ann Yap, sales director of Roberto Coin for Asia-Pacific Philip Grimes and wife of Italian Ambassador Ciarrola Fabbri

MASTERCARD'S Chris Parreno and Harry Gan

ALS Welch and Silvia Narvaez

KATRINA Tantoco and husband Paulo Lukenga

ANZ CEO for Philippines and Thailand Pusadila Mandrehalasi, Kathy Yap and husband Mike Hwang

SAMSUNG'S Dominic, Marketing communications head for MMP and IT marketing Coco Domingo; Van Strazen; Metro Style icon gorgeous Anne Curtis; Mega's Style Icon tall, handsome athlete Chris Tiu; and product manager, cyber smart Mylene Gabriel

KELLY Hsu and Carlos Fernandez

METROBANK Card honorees, AVP for Usage and Portfolio, mall, handsome Alex Tiongco, Ana Carvalho, Mike Reynoso, and Sanchez

STYLE Star-of-the Night Ashley Sara, host and CEO/CFO's fiancée

EBC Reunion and Patricia Evangelista

Chocolate, trains and bells

From page C4

The verdict: I was a big fan of Rush Hour and this game is just as fun. When I opened the box and started playing, I ended up ignoring my laptop for the rest of the night. This game can keep you occupied for hours.

In five words or less: More fun at the mall

Best for: Kids and adults, eight years old and above

Why your kids would love it: Because it's fun. Say what you want about computer puzzles, there's nothing like holding actual toy pieces in your hands. They'll love this game even more if they're into trains.

Why you'd love it: This is a game you and your kids can play over and over again. Because even if you've finished a challenge, you can go back and try it again. The best part? No need for batteries.

Warning: Sometimes, you'd spend more time setting up the challenge than solving it. But it's fine because even setting the challenges up is fun.

RAINBOW MUSICAL BELLS

Price: P1,799.75

Number of players: 1 or more

What's in the box: Eight colored metal bells, each one playing a different tone

How to play: Pick up the bells and let music fill the room. You can play songs or just pick up the bells randomly, it's up to you.

The verdict: I played the rainbow bells in front of an 8-month-old baby who looks and acts like he's a toddler. His eyes lit up at the bells' bright colors and he got so excited when he heard the sound of the bells.

He started making sounds, and I'm kidding.

All toys are available at Rockbee and Landco

Best for: Kids, three years old and up.

Why your kids would love it: These bells are a treat for the eyes and the ears. Not only will your kids enjoy playing with colorful bells and hear the lovely tones it makes (same, they still also have a blast trying to play songs with their new toy.

Why you'd love it: One way to introduce your kids to the joy of making music.

Warning: The bells are made of metal so make sure the kids know that they're only for making music, and not for banging on your head.

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WITH LOOK MAGAZINE

Dad's bonding formula

Spending time with their kids is their priority

By Pam Pastor

EDDIE Boy Escudero with family

FOR THESE MODern dads, there's no such thing as "too busy."

Sure, they have a lot on their hands—gigs and deals, work and bills. But those things don't get in the way of their priority—spending time with their kids.

Here, dads share their bonding formula.

RAYMUND Marasigan with daughter Alexi

Raymund Marasigan

28, musician

Raymund Marasigan is a rock star. But for nine-year-old Anari Kim, he's just "Dada."

Despite the crazy schedule, this musician, who has more bands than J.D. Salinger has books, makes sure he always has time for his daughter.

"The drinks my job is rilly bez when I get games for the Hanuah blowjobs movie premiere, I was the coolest dad ever."

Describe yourself as a dad.

I'm a work in progress. Habar I try as be a good father and provider.

Are you strict or do you spoil her?

I'm not strict. As long as she does her homework, she can do any kid stuff all bedtime. That was how my bibu raised us.

How do you bond with your kid?

I work nights so I get to spend a lot of free time with my kid. We skate, swim, ride bikes, play badminton, watch TV and movies. I try to get her to play activities that can get her away from me much computer and video games. I get to take her to gigs so long as they're kid-friendly, like to the mall, schools and the beach.

Unforgettable memory:

Just this week, she discovered Rock Band the video game and she agreed to learn drums. I taught her the first basic beat. When she got it, I jammed on a pair of bongos for a few minutes. I'm so stoked!

What's one lesson you want to teach your child?

There's more than one. I try to instill, teach the basic stuff like honor, respect and loyalty. I hope it do well.

What do you love the most about being a dad?

Running around with Anari saving the world. Train corruption, pollution and crime.

DIRECTOR Paolo Abella with son Raxi

Eddie Boy Escudero

54, photographer

His kids—Paolito, 32, Michelle, 32, Jean, 29, and Angela, 28—are grown up, but photographer Eddie Boy Escudero still tries to make sure he spends enough time with them.

Describing himself as "very lenient and proud," he enjoys ruling out with his kids.

And—he's discovered a new joy being a grandpa. "Being a grandfather is another story altogether."

Are you strict or do you spoil?

Neither. I'm lucky to have very sensible kids.

How do you bond with your kids?

Just the regular stuff like eating out, going to movies. We used to travel abroad when we still could.

What's your favorite thing to do with them?

Eat out or have pizza delivered. And shoot our annual Christmas portrait.

Any favorite stories about your kids?

Our twins were only around four years old when they were playing in our apartment's window. A neighbor saw them and asked where their parents were. He heard them answer back, "Inside their room, loving-loving!"

Unforgettable memory:

Angelo was born in New York and all of us were there to pick her up. One day, we decided to take her to Coney Island. We took her on a subway ride and she was only two weeks old.

What's one lesson you want to teach your children?

Honesty.

What do you love the most about being a dad?

Everything! Watching them grow up is my biggest thrill. When my daughter got married, it was kinda sour of the happiest and saddest days of my life.

Paolo Abella

32, Director

"Daddy, what's porn?" Paolo Abella's nine-year-old son Raxi asked his dad recently.

This did not faze the 32-year-old director. In fact, he loves it when his son talks to him. "He gave all services and asks, 'Dad, why do we have to live if we're going to die anyway?'"

Paolo loves his jobs as a director but he relishes his role as a father even more. "I realize that to ever hang on being a better person, my son gets a better role model."

Describe yourself as a dad.

Father/big brother/bully

Are you strict or are you a spoiler?

A little bit of both. But if I were to be completely honest, probably more of a disciplinarian than a spoiler.

How do you bond with your son?

Skate, cook, watch movies, run errands.

What's your favorite thing to do with your son?

Tease, haha!

What's one lesson you want to teach your child?

Always do the right thing.

TOY REVIEW

Chocolate, trains and bells

These toys will keep your kids away from the TV even for just a few hours

By Pam Pastor

CHOCOLATE DISCS YOU NEED TO PUT IN THE RIGHT ORDER, a train that travels on a grid-cut and colorful metal bells that play different music tones. These toys have one thing in common—they can keep your kids away from the TV even for just a few hours.

CHOCOLATE FIX

Price: P699.95

Number of players: 1

What's in the box: Nine chocolate pieces, one game city, 40 mind challenge cards and one Game-On Bag so you can take the puzzle around.

How to play: Solve each puzzle challenge by arranging nine chocolate pieces onto the game tray in their correct positions. This is a game of logical deduction.

The verdict: I thought this would be a piece of cake (er, chocolate). I was wrong. I breezed through the puzzles like I had a timer to beat—until I hit puzzle number eight. I was stumped. That's when I started to really get into the game. It was challenging and at times frustrating, and I loved every minute of it.

In five words or less: Like Sudoku, only sweeter

Best for: Kids and adults, eight years old and above

Why your kids will love it: The chocolate pieces are adorable and the puzzles fun and challenging.

Why you will love it: Not only is this game good brain exercise for your kids, you can play it yourself and give your mind a workout.

Warning: This is addictive. My brother stayed up until 4 a.m. the first night he tried it. And yeah, it might make you crave for chocolate, too.

RAILROAD RUSH HOUR

Price: P950.75

Number of players: 1. But you can also play this with your kids, who are sure to finish more challenges with your help.

What's in the box: Gameboard grid, 20 game pieces, 30 Junior Challenges for 6- to 8-year-olds, 40 Beginner-to-Expert Challenge Cards, instruction booklet, handy travel bag

How to play: Your red caboose is trapped in the freight yard. Move the blocking cars and luggage platforms out of the way until you create a clear path for your red locomotive to run.

TURN TO PAGE B-12

LIFESTYLE Home&Entertaining

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■ For the launch of Oprah's O Magazine at NY Metropolitan Museum, he designed a triangular chandelier /D4

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-Ina Calzado

"I'm turning 48 but thanks to Marie France, I've kept my 25-inch waistline. Physique Inch-Loss definitely helps me maintain a flatter, slimmer waistline!"
- Caren Martin

"I went from a 34-inch waist to 28-inch in just 2 months at Marie France. My secret? Physique Inch-Loss. Mommy or not, you'll definitely love it!"
- Bernadette Allyson

More about the amazing PHYSIQUE INCH-LOSS

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Q: HOW SAFE IS THE TREATMENT?
A: Physique Inch-Loss is actually non-invasive so there's absolutely no downtime. You can immediately resume normal activities after the treatment. More and more clients get impressed with this effortless and massage-like treatment!

Q: HOW FAST CAN I SEE THE RESULTS?
A: In just 4 to 6 weeks, you get a firmer, flatter tummy area – no scars, bumps or ripples!

CARLA Argentino Ramsey embodies the art of gracious entertaining.

THE ENGLOBED area in Carla's favorite spot in her home, where the view of the garden allows the outside to come into the home. —NOTES & PLAY STORIES

'Where the only thing better than the decor is the food'

By Liz Bernardo and Francis Jacinto

WHEN WE ENTERED CARLA RAMSEY's home, we instantly felt like we were part of the family. She is one of the most gracious people in Manila today.

Her husband Douglas, to you, describes their home as a place "where the only thing better than the decor is the food."

Carla has put together such a beautiful home which showcases mementos from her travels, heirlooms, photos from her parents and beautiful glass sculptures made in a factory Carla and Douglas used to own.

Our favorite part of the house is the enclosed lanai area overlooking lush gardens and the pool. Carla does her own gardening and credits her lush foliage to an organic fertilizer she uses. The plants look happy and healthy so that setting to the lanai makes you feel you are one with nature.

The most eye-catching piece is a red Buddha statue made of red lacquer wood. The piece is a work of art in itself. Carla makes it even more spectacular by encasing it in a 19th century ship's lantern. It sits atop an antique Korean chest.

Every space in the Ramsey home has its own anecdote, and it was so much fun hearing all those stories from Carla and Douglas.

'Cooking house'

Carla never orders out when she entertains people. She describes her home as a "cooking house," as eating in the family's most enjoyed

THE RAMSEY family: Douglas, Tyler, Samantha and Carla

THIS beautiful antique Buddha is encased in a 19th century ship lantern. Hand-carried by Carla from London, it now sits proudly in her home's nave.

bonding time. Her style is casual, which grandly complements her graciousness.

For afternoon merienda, we had roasted peanuts baked with cheese. The dish was introduced as the house specialty and one bite tells you why. There were also pasta with sun-dried tomatoes and olives, homemade dulong and Carla's famous fresh lumpia. The best part was the heavenly dessert of fried banana with cinnamon.

Truly a memorable afternoon with a very memorable and gracious hostess.

CARLA'S dining table is simple and elegant. Here she serves home-cooked delicacies to her guests and family.

PART of the garden framing the lanai area

THE FORMAL living room of the Ramsey home includes many striking pieces.

Be a proactive patient

THE ST. LUKE'S MEDICAL CENTER has just launched its Center for Quality and Patient Safety.

Dr. Edgardo R. Cortez, vice president and medical director, said they hoped it would be the start of a national movement for, as a growing number of people are learning, the hospital, a place for treatment and cure, can also be one of the most dangerous places.

Cortez cited statistics from the United States showing that some 100,000 people die every year due to hospital errors.

You have probably read some of the horror stories about medical errors. Recently, Hollywood actor Dennis Quaid and his wife received a sizable settlement from a well-known hospital after their newborn twins almost died after being given the wrong dosage of medication.

The wife of another Hollywood actor/director died of the acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome when she was infected with the AIDS-causing human immune deficiency virus from a blood transfusion.

Big numbers

Dr. Alejandro Dizon, chief quality officer, said that while individual errors in a hospital may seem insignificant, when taken together they could add up to a pretty alarming figure.

St. Luke's program will cover all those obvious areas where problems can occur—wrong medications, sloppy procedure, unsterile environment, mistaken identities in patient embossers the wrong procedures or is given the wrong medicine because there has been a mix-up in patients' charts), among others.

THE CONSUMER
Linda B. Bolido

In fact, they are even retraining staff on nurse legibly to make sure physicians can read prescriptions.

St. Luke's initiative is certainly laudable.

However, as Dizon stressed, they can only do so much. Patients, who pay for their services, should just be as concerned about their safety and the quality of care they are getting.

Patient's responsibility

But treatment and healing are two-way processes. While physicians are undoubtedly experts, they still need their patients' help to give the best kind of care. Patients have to learn everything there is to know about their diseases and they must try to understand these by asking their doctors all the questions in their minds. A good physician who really cares for his patient will be willing to discuss the case openly and honestly.

Dizon said they even encourage patients to seek a second, a third or as many opinions as they want.

And just because there are now all sorts of complicated and highly technical tests using expensive and very sensitive equipment, it does not mean that the doctor already knows everything there is to know about a patient. Patients still have to tell the doctor, and his very learned ahead is, what exactly is it they feel. If a medication causes nausea or dizziness or some other discomfort, if it does not provide relief, if there is pain, the doctor has to be told. The drug may not be the right one for a person and has to be changed.

There are many other things patients have to do to make sure they are getting quality and the right kind of care from their doctors and their hospital. St. Luke's has put together the most important things in a brochure that is available at the St. Luke's Center for Quality and Patient Safety.

Send letters to The Consumer, Lifestyle Section, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 5th Floor Chino Roces Ave. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City. Fax 897-0783/84 or e-mail lbolido@inquirer.com.ph.

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Ebarle at UST Museum

"PAMANGI I (L)" by Jose Arvesu Ebarle

JOSE ARVESU Ebarle's second one-person exhibition, titled "Pinagsanlan" is ongoing until Aug. 1 at the UST Museum. The exhibit features paintings that continue to be entered by the art of indigenous Filipinos. Besides done in bold colors of blue, yellow, red and green, her latest works display her sensitivity to the motifs found in them art.

In her recent paintings, the influences of patterns and colors she has seen in both traditional and contemporary textiles, pottery, baskets and even paintings of Filipino women identified as ethnic groups is vital. This time, she does not only salute the intricate patterns in the art of the Mamanwa, she symbolizes them with a layer of beauty that is distinctively hers.

Ebarle has joined several group exhibitions in the past. Her thirteen Oleo focused on female figures in various forms, such as dancers in the middle of a movement or women in repose, she adopted a style akin to impressionists. It was also during this period when the painter is more active as a member of Bacolodnon, she only returned artists' organization in the Philippines.

Three years before, she has created from her evelope your values, in between working for her degree in advertising from the University of Santo Tomas (UST), College of Architecture and Fine Arts, she would dabble in painting.

Having achieved professionally in her career Ebarle manages the marketing of Rosy-Gem in the Philippines, having attended her education in Gemology her title in Wisdom and Development as Gem Laboratory of the Philippines), with her children grown and deciding careers of their own, she is at last able to return to her passion, the hope, is for her to relocate in the Philippine Art Educators Association, of which she is now president, that has spurred her on to paint with fervor.

The UST Museum of Arts and Sciences is located at Mezzanine Level, Main Bldg., UST España, Manila. Call 731-1815.

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How he creates events to remember

For the launch of Oprah's O Magazine at NY Metropolitan Museum, he designed a triangular chandelier

"AN EVENT to Remember" by Joey Sibal, dubbed as the "Inspired Designer of Unique Environmental Settings"

JENNY Sibal: "Be authentic and true to your client."

By Margie C. Enriquez
Contributor

NEW YORK/MANILA, CHRISTIE EVENTS designer Joey Sibal faced one of the most daunting tasks in his career. He had to style 22 rooms of the Cancer's Palace in different suites—in one day. With his background in teaching, choreography and theater, he set a detailed model for the ambiance, replete with lighting, and taught it to his assistants in various sites.

At this downright, he was paid close to half a million dollars.

Sibal flew to Manila last week to promote his forthcoming book, "An Event to Remember," published by Resource, Tuberoh Chang-Ming and Mai Icdo Lobel will chair the book launch at Makati Shangri-La on Sept. 15.

Priced at $60 or P3,300, the coffee-table book consolidates Sibal's achievements. The cover shows a mixer in rose shaping up, mind, forming into a heart. It then serves a

WEDDING at Mandarin Oriental New York. Cherry blossoms on four-foot stalkers establish the wedding's presence in the room. Each centerpiece is dramatized by pin spotlights. The color motif is celadon and pink and the napkins are adorned with spotted doves.

Lucite tabletops, adorned with Parisian photographic orchids and green calla lilies. Although the choice have the classic bamboo undertones, they are given a modern twist with resin and Lucite.

"I am known for creating an environment. I like modern classics. I make use of LED and mood lighting. I'm not into flamboyance as in overwedding. I go for solutions look like Philippe Starck's," says Sibal.

Sibal's style grew from his academic training. He studied architecture at Adamson University, taught Chinese painting at Ayala Museum and directed his own folk dance company in Binondo. One of his 50 students was Rudy Cuna whose floral arrangements he greatly admired.

Nearly 20 years ago, he flew to New York to seek his luck. In 1992, he worked for the premier events designer Preston Bailey through a referral.

Sibal had never touched flowers before he first worked by Bailey, he quickly learned the ropes, while Bailey learned from Sibal's theatrical lighting design and sets.

Branding companies

In 1996, Sibal established his own company, Design Fusion, with business partner Edwin Jones, a former classmate of Cuna.

The turning point of his career was designing the cocktails for 2,000 guests at the Borgata Hotel & Casino in Atlantic City. Since 2000, he's been getting big projects which start at a quarter of a million dollars—"$300,000 minimum for corporate events."

For a CEO group dinner at the Temple of Dendur at Metropolitan Museum, the company paid half a million dollars just for space use. Sibal's floral arrangements were as high as 10 ft. consisting of stone-fruit papayas on iron rod, hoopline vines. The night, Queen Latifah, he assisted by the dramatic arrangements yet still establish intimacy as they sat each other across the table.

"The Fortune 500 crowd didn't want something Quinceanera. I used related pieces for the holidays with magnolia leaves, lotus pods and orchids," he says.

Sibal adds that he always bends the venue. For the Diageo top dinners he had only 15 minutes to design the red umbrella logo on the museum steps. As a solution, he painted acrylic in blood with the dogs and served as centerpiece.

When Richard Branson, owner of Virgin Atlantic, launched the first-class service for the Chicago leaders event, Sibal treated an English cottage-inspired, modern tapestry of hydrangea, roses and ranunculus in a copper planter. Whereas lunches made it look organic while clusters of concentrated flowers from the topiary to soften the look. The topiary was finished by two giant Lucite columns, split to pink.

He did a nature wonderland theme for Melissa Rivers' wedding at The Pierre and Oprah Winfrey's launch of O Magazine at New York Metropolitan Museum. Sibal designed a triangular chandelier, made of paper and draped with flowers.

Expensive wedding

Sibal's biggest wedding client was the owners of Hidden Hollow House. At the wedding was held at Hotel Sofitel in Miami, Sibal had to work on both dinner and brunch.

He used jewel tones, arranged by designer on a gold leaf column to a cascading.

For the reception, he built a collapsible Art Deco chandelier, evocative of Miami Beach's architecture and the Chrysler Building. Crystals cascaded from the chandelier for glitz.

What's the secret of Sibal's style?

He says with a grin, "You've got to know who will sit at the table, their lifestyle and tastes. Then go with color. What will you create? Is it to wow, excite or make it simple? Then, look for good pieces. That is where talent comes out. Research and make it your own."

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Editor Ernesto G. Velarde

ENTERTAINMENT

Dennis the menace, finally

Kapuso star plays bad boy in independent film

By Reyssi Sun Dayo Jr.

GMA 7 ACTOR Dennis Trillo finally gets to flaunt his tattoos on the big screen—on the Gutierrez-Viray-Viray "Isang Mga Kuting Kulay."

Usually, his tattoos are covered with makeup, but in this indie drama, the body art proved useful in getting into character.

"I think this is the heaviest role I've ever done," he says of his character in TV director GB Sampedro's debut film.

It's also the grittiest and most daring for the Mario Bros. love interest, he both several women quick succession.

"I'm a typical macho boy raised home from Recto, Manila," he says. "Mayaggamit Maraming."

He plays a street-smart con artist.

To prepare for the role, he watched DVDs of his favorite actors like Leonardo DiCaprio ("The Basketball Diaries"), Robert Downey ("The Gamekeeper") and Johnny Depp ("Donnie Brasco"), to get into the criminal mind. "I wanted to know what it feels like to live a tough guy."

He enjoyed working with director Sampedro. "He's easy to work with and has lots of fresh ideas. Very new school."

Like 'Pulp Fiction'

Supervising producer Noel Ferrer says Trillo "blended well with the indie film's cast and crew. He gave his best."

"In short, it's Trillo's first indie

DENNIS TRILLO

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3 THE HAUNTED
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5 VILLA ESTRELLA
6 ICE AGE 3: (DIGITAL 3D)
7 ICE AGE 3 I DOSE
8 BENTE
9 GRAVE MISTAKE
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ERMITA

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7 TRANSFORMERS 2 / GRAVE MISTAKE

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NOVALICHES | **PIONEER**

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1 HANNAH THE MONTANA THE MOVIE
2 THE HAUNTED
3 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
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2 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
3 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
4 BLOOD: THE LAST VAMPIRE

DASMARINAS | **IMUS**

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4 HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE
1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
3 VILLA ESTRELLA
4 HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE

STARMILLS

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
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3 VILLA ESTRELLA
4 HANNAH MONTANA THE MOVIE
5 BLOOD: THE LAST VAMPIRE
6 FROM WITHIN / THE COFFIN

ANGELES | **TACLOBAN**

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2 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
3 DRAG ME TO HELL

BACOLOD | **ILOILO**

1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
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3 VILLA ESTRELLA
4 ECHELON CONSPIRACY
5 BLOOD: THE LAST VAMPIRE
6 FROM WITHIN
1 ICE AGE 3: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS
2 TRANSFORMERS: Revenge of the Fallen
3 VILLA ESTRELLA
4 THE TAKING OF PELHAM 123
5 BLOOD: THE LAST VAMPIRE
6 ECHELON CONSPIRACY

ALFRED Vargas

Stars'

From page 11

turned it during the show's anniversary."

Alfred Vargas: "I would always desire to MJ's 'Beat It' during our family reunions. I kept practicing till I felt like I'm as good as Michael already. His manic mode on stage portrays my fine adrenaline rush in performing and I loved it!"

Nyor Velasco: "I was in Grade 3 when 'We are the World' came out. My late stepfather explained to me that it was sung by a group of famous singers. At that time, I couldn't recognize anyone's voice except that of my idol Michael Jackson. I kept jumping when 'I found out he was the one responsible for coming up with that song. MJ's 'Man in the Mirror' was the first song I learned to play on guitar."

Marlaia Riaffi (Nee Fabic): "The best for me is MJ's 'Remember' from his 2001 album 'Invincible.' Everybody loves a good comeback and I thought that album was going to do it for him. Unfortunately, he had a feud with the Sony boss at the time and it was post-9/11, so it didn't get the attention it deserved. It didn't even have a video. The soulful ballad harkens back to vintage MJ."

Joel Madela: "Man in the Mirror' has always been one of the most requested songs when I was still with a band. I love its message that change should start from us. 'Gone Too Soon' is on repeat mode in my iPod as I mourn MJ's untimely death."

Maryrose Fagalan: "I will never get tired of singing along and dancing to MJ's 'Rock with You.' It's an upbeat love song with such a fun melody which always puts me in a happy mood."

Sandra Bartolome: "MJ's 'Bad' was the very first song I sang when I started performing in public."

Paulo Santos: "MJ's 'Off the Wall' is my fave. It's the very first cassette I bought."

E-mail entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

Opening This Week

Bwisit
Stars: Dagsue Estrada, Richard Gomez, Jennifer Sevilla, Eric Quizon, Eric Ric Garcia, Gloria de Castro, Aldred Gatchalian; directed by Mel Chionglo

Three months collide violently: a feelgood (Gomez) catches his wife (Estrada) cheating on him, as a land-titling audit commences; two fortunes and a student activist (Gen Sydney) up to chaotic nonsense. The ninth and last film in the Star Circle series was graded "C" by the Cinema Evaluation Board.

Grave Mistake
Stars: Selen Hensel Gold, Lovely Rivero, Iglu Lopez; directed by Felipe Rosco Bold

Frustrated by the inability of his wife (Rivero) to get pregnant, an African missionary (Hensel-Bold) turns to another woman (Lopez)—a "grave mistake" that eventually leads to the destruction of his ministry and family. This digital drama is directed by filmmaker-writer-director Rosco-Bold, who has been living in the country for nearly a decade. Hensel-Bold asserts that he "loves telling stories through visuals."

Brutus, Ang Pagkalakbay
Stars: Tal Rivera, Ronnie Lazaro, Vina Morales, Timothy Medalcal; directed by Tara Burtenger

After agreeing to compete under the illegal rigged, two Hungyan kids (Medina, Medalcal) embark on a journey of self-discovery through the forest. Special Jury Prize winner in last year's Cinemalaya, this digital drama also stars actors in Bernardo and Sweet Mae Soto, Lito Zulueta of the Internet says that it is "incredible in its breadth," adding that it's "well-photographed and well-edited." Released only in Robinsons Galleria Indie Hits.

The Haunted (The Deaths of Ian Stone)
Stars: Miller Tegel, Jamie Murray, Christina Cole, Michael Shanks; directed by Bruce Plaza

A pair (Tegel) is murdered only to wake up the following day, to be stalked and killed again by demons. Steve Boudreault of CinebistaClique rates it up at "an intriguing journey into an imaginative fantasy-romance."

Hannah Montana the Movie
Stars: Miley Cyrus, Vanessa Williams, Emily Osment, Lucas Till; directed by Peter Chelsom

Stars say Hannah (Cyrus) reveals from showbiz as a "Disney-ness hurts to resist her roots. Owen Gleiberman of Entertainment Weekly opines: "Cyrus, as always, is a professional charmer [when] hand to sense." David Hiu, movie of Daily Inquirer notes: "It's all good, clean fun for blood, story and forgettable, too."

LOVELY Rivero and Felipe Rosco Bold

The case of bunk's . . .

Front page 4A

▸ Junior Rico, on supposed cosmo mistakes that led to him being called a "bad girl": Hindi po ako bad girl. May mga naging kasalanan lang akong hindi ko sinasadya. Hindi ganun ako kasama. Ang sama ng tawag nila sa akin." (Online "bad" means kasi.)

▸ Bb Gandanghari, on Bob Arum's impromptu pics by a Samsung unit: "It was really sad for the embarkment of the people. Mula noon ay ang hirap na talaga ng buhay. Ang sarap sana kung ang mga pulitiko ay ito ay mga tao. It's just like a parade."

▸ Carla Abellana, on being in-laws at a restaurant in show biz: "Of course, hanggang sa pagkain ng dinadaing pa yun. There's really no way to prepare yourself for adoption. Pag nandiyan, it's just a matter of how you carry yourself and your channel to own your attitude towards foreigners."

▸ Dolphy, on Kristine Hidalgo dumped naiulat kay over the net video scandal: "Product ng showbiz. Hindi ako nakapanood nun . . . Pa-Christ! Sa mga good natures na makinange ang bong kolokoman. Napagsigaan niya masamada ang Bob Medical Group at nawalan ng trabaho ang 300 employees na walang malamig dahilansa sa tapbonding of the sex videos. Ano ba ang nangyari? Pinarusahan ba ang mga manonood?"

▸ Boy Mills's reaction to Anne Curtis's statement that she saw him on a porn movie: "I have moved on." (Dumb.)

▸ Ruffa Gutierrez, on John Lloyd Cruz after paparazzi photos were released showing them together in a hotel and along a shopping trip in Cebu: "Tahi ang sasabihin ko, I'm happy [and] relief's company. We go out. We went. How lonely is hard maghanap kasama. Pilla naman siguro ng mainit sa akin. I enjoy time with a friend. Friend or with a male friend." *Rich Cerey Flores*

Interview continued on Page 4A

Dennis the menace . . .

Front page 4A

But you—the person strangers tell through.

"When I read the script, I told myself that it's the kind of looks flirty that I want to do," he recalls. "I like the interconnecting stories of different city characters. It reminded me of Amores Perros and Pulp Fiction. It offers a new story-telling style seldom seen in Pinoy movies."

Curious

Known as a masterstream actor, Dennis has always been curious about the indie scene.

"Indie films give actors a certain amount of freedom," he explains. "Were given room to experiment and try new things. We can see what our actors can do—we can see what we want to do ourselves. They save lifelong jobs/actors."

He's just wonderful that his fans would get involved with Dennis the menace in "Bella."

"In fact, I'm excited to let them see a different side of me," he notes.

In any case, his fans can still see the usual good boy Dennis on the nightly GMA 7 series "Bella ng Buhay."

"I find it fulfilling that I get to do various kinds of roles. People often see me as famous . . . But's only it's refreshing to be cast in a light romantic comedy like Bella as 'Ito.' I want to prove my versatility as an actor."

If Dennis pulls through, he is next to portray another lead long a Chinese comedian and host, Dr. Hanson Cantillon instructs, in Regal's Mayo Months Film Fest entry "Mano Po 6."

GARFIELD BY JIM DAVIS

B. LIPAN BY JOEL ABRERA

PUGAD BABOY BY ROMEL LAGMAN JR.

DICK TRACY

LOVEBUGS BY ELIZABETH CHOCHOLO

JAMES BOND

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BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

TULSOK BY MARK COLL

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY DAN DARIZUALDO

KIKO MACHINE BY RANDY ABRERA

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY You have a protective and sympathetic attitude toward others. Others are endeared by your strength. You are hardworking, practical and shows all realistic. People trust you. You have many sense of humor and inspire courage. You have much to look forward to this year because it could be one of the most powerful, unpredictable years of your life. Those born: Christopher E. Moore, author, humor/science, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Continue to work hard. Success is within your reach. Don't be afraid to express yourself. But remember you do not have to tell the truth every time.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) All that change in your life you're trying to figure out what you want to be when it comes to your career. Some of your best ideas are coming to you now. Be open to new opportunities with children as well. And so it goes.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) You're in the box seat of trying to figure out how to accomplish all of these for yourself. You need to keep your head down and focus on the task at hand. You want to feel secure for your future.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Fantastic! Issues will fall changes continue to be all good. Just go with the flow. There's an old song saying, "Time moves at a snail's pace." Well, it's not very catchy. Time moves at a perfect pace.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) Stay out of debt for much as possible. This is the best way for Leo to have financial freedom right now. You need to stay focused.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) Venus RXOG, your life has been changing dramatically. You have gone up to 60, and now you have to start to slow down. It's a whole new beginning.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) At 100, Now, you're setting go of outside, planet and procrastinate. Try to think of this less as a time of loss and more as a time of freedom.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) Your challenge now is to learn how to work with others as a team. If you've been working on your own, it's time to move on. You want to get the cooperation of others without having to tell you!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) This is a time of great achievement in your life. You are very clearly what is working, and what is not. Do not consider what is not working a failure. Just move on.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) This is clearly a time of preparation for you. Don't take this personally, but others have increased. This is a time of letting others see your talents and your own.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) Because partners are changing or losing jobs, your responsibilities have increased. This is a time of letting others see your talents and your own.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) Partnerships continue to be challenging. Successful joint ventures require realistic, unprejudiced re-

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

	6	1	2	8	3			
		3			5	6	1	
		7			9			8
	1					9		4
8							3	6
5							7	
	2				5			
		4			1			
			6	7				

Difficulty Level ★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

8	5	9	2	6	1	4	3	7
4	2	3	7	8	9	1	5	6
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3	9	2	8	1	7	6	4	5
5	8	4	3	2	6	7	1	9
7	6	1	4	9	5	3	8	2
9	4	5	1	7	2	8	6	3
2	1	7	6	3	8	5	9	4
6	3	8	9	5	4	2	7	1

CLICK!

MTV tribute to Michael Jackson

MTV REVISITS THE influential career of King of Pop Michael Jackson with over 12-hour special programs, showing some of his career between homage, on July 31, from 9 a.m. until 12 midnight.

The programs are "Michael Jackson: His Story In Music (Parts 1 to 5)," 9 a.m.; "The Story of Michael Jackson (Parts 1 to 8)," 12 p.m.; "Michael Jackson: The Legend Continues," 3 p.m.; "Michael Jackson: Epic Journey," 6:30 p.m.; "Michael Jackson: Scrapbook History in the Making, 8 p.m., "Michael Jackson: Changed History," 9:30 p.m.; "Michael Jackson: Moonwalker," 8 p.m.; "Backstage," 11 p.m.; "Backstage," 7:00 p.m.; "A Celebration of Michael Jackson on MTC" 8 p.m.; "MTV News: A Michael Jackson Tribute Special," 9 p.m.

'Special Agent One'

"Special Agent One," a new animated television series starting Sonic Activa the voice of One, premieres on July 11 at 12:30 a.m. on Playhouse Disney. Starting this time slot is every Saturday and Sunday at 12:30 a.m.

The interactive series stars One, a funny, lovable, hardworking snuffed panda bear who is a special agent in training.

MMTA MOVIE GUIDE

MOTION PICTURES EXHIBITORS ASSOCIATION

NOW SHOWING

Movies Schedules Prices Subject To Change Without Prior Notice

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STA. LUCIA EAST GRAND MALL

THEATRE

DRAG ME TO HELL
BENTE
TRANSFORMERS 2
THE HAUNTED
TRANSFORMERS 2
TRANSFORMERS
VILLA ESTRELLA

Robinsons Movieworld
Robinsons Cinemas
Gateway Cineplex 18
Ayala Cinemas
Ayala Cineplex
Trinoma Cinemas
Fairview Terraces
Shangri-La Plaza
Megamall Cinemas
Greenbelt Cinemas
Glorietta Cinemas
Festival Supermall
Market! Market!
Alabang Town Center
Southmall Cinemas
Sta. Rosa Cinemas
Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall
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The case of hunk's unpaid loan

By the Entertainment staff

HANDSOME HUNK STYLES HIMSELF AS a half-Caucasian from abroad who somehow transferred into local showbiz.

Turned out KBO backstory is all fiction. He was discovered while searching a Popular Singer's stall down in the province.

PD's friend, an influential Hiraegic noticed 101 and she too later became one's mistress.

101 allegedly borrowed money from IM so he could relocate to Manila... the note purportedly covered his transportation, food and lodging expenses.

But after 101 hit it big, he conveniently forgot IM and she "loans" he has yet to pay until now, relations ugly.

Co-star turned stalker

Troubled Actress is now officially a stalker.

Although, TS had been sucked into a project, he continues to send lewd and creepy text messages to his former Co-star.

Before anyone can claim PC for not changing her cell phone number, she explains: "I'm keeping all of TS's explicit messages so I can use them as evidence against him in court."

Nice girl.

Smoking the peace pipe

Most eyes were fixed on publicly reserving celebrities who eventually made peace at the wake of talent manager Douglas Quijano. But few people noticed Gorgeous Celebrity who guided laughably with Singer-Actress.

Unknown to most people, GC and AS were former friends-turned-romantic rivals.

GC's husband was previously (and heavily) involved with AS.

According to tattle tales, he only learned of her breakup from GC's guy after he proposed to GC.

Dingdong wants to be a singer

Dingdong Dantes, already successful as a TV and movie actor, wants to expand his wings—this time as a singer. He recently signed a contract with Universal Records' Kathleen Dy-Go, and is currently in the studio finishing his debut album.

Surprise visitors

Cebu's "Dancing Inmates," famous worldwide for their YouTube videos, had surprise visitors during their latest show that paid tribute to Michael Jackson. The guests included Boots Ilac Gov. Gil S. Sevellano and Lapu-Lapu Consul General and National Association of Independent Travel Agencies chairman emeritus Ruben Lim Joseph, with members of Nalsas and League of Tourism Students of the Philippines.

JESSICA Jackson, an Australian and Michael Jackson tribute artist, has turned his Sydney home into a mini-Neverland Ranch.

AP

Ex-Beatles/Stones manager dies

NEW YORK—Music manager Allen Klein, a no-holds-barred businessman who once represented the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, died of Alzheimer's disease on Saturday in his New York City home. He was 77.

Klein was convicted of tax fraud in 1979 and served two months in prison for failing to report income from sales of pre-recorded records by the Beatles and other groups; the records were supposed to be given away.

The Rolling Stones gave no immediate comment on Klein's death.

Klein was involved with Elvis—whose company still owns an enormous chunk of their 1960s songs—that Mick Jagger went ahead him down the hall of a posh hotel.

AP

A new home for 'Slumdog' actor

MUMBAI—One of the child actors from the Oscar-winning film "Slumdog Millionaire" has moved from his Mumbai shantytown shack into a new home, the trust set up to manage his investments said Saturday.

"Rubina Ali (news) finally moved into their new home on Friday. We gave the keys to them," said Naja Mahon, from the Jai Ho Trust, established by the movie's British director Danny Boyle and producer Christian Colson.

Mahon said the family's new home is a 250-square-foot (229-square-meter) ground-floor apartment in the Milan Subway area of Santa Cruz, near the Bandra district of central Mumbai.

AFP

Top of the talk shows

For those who missed last weekend's goldbricks on TV (And why are you moved, if you are moved.)

✦Dyle Alcazid, on the upcoming wedding of ex-wife Michelle van Eimeren and her fiancé Mark Moreno: "Extreme happiness always. She's found happiness. Di ko ito mentioned mo!"

ENQUIRER

KING of Pop Michael Jackson with Superstar Nora Aunor on the cover of a Filipino fan magazine in 1978, when he performed in Manila as a member of the Jacksons.

Stars' fave Michael Jackson songs

MICHAEL JACKSON fanatic like me instructed the Entertainment Desk to write a farewell. It's so hard to picture the late, anointed King of Pop even like this. He came about

Dolly Anne Carvajal

DOLLY WOOD

everywhere images of endless movements and soulful grins.

As MJ once said, "Who wants one in my? Everybody dreams of immortality. The creator will go but the creation remains. That's why I feel my need to my work is to will live on."

True to his word, MJ left such an incredible legacy. It's almost impossible for someone not to have a few MJ song. As a tribute to my idol, I asked some stars to share their MJ memories.

MJ was truly a gift from up above. Now it's time for one of heaven's extraordinary creators to go back in where he belongs—to a place where he needs no more painkillers and where he can freely play like the kid he always wanted to be.

Take a bow, Michael, as the whole world sends you off with a standing ovation. We cannot love and thank you enough for being our "thriller" like no other.

Carmi Martinez: "Heal the World" is my first MJ song. I remember we were enjoying the beach in Boracay, Bohol. Napakalaki at napakaganda! I said to myself na sana all magtipon-tipon sa mundo. Hindi na pinoproblema ay rasismo ang magpinsan ang hanta. It's a timely reminder to take care of our natural resources like our beaches."

Anne Curtis: "I love MJ's 'Rock with You.' It brings back high school memories."

Ogie Alcasid: "She's Out of my Life' was always a part of my repertoire when I was still singing in bridges."

Heather Octaviano: "Billie Jean' reminds me of how crazy I was as a kid trying to do the Moonwalk. To this day, that song always makes me wanna get up and dance."

Rachelle Siojamlee: "Man in the Mirror' reminds me of my first 'That's Entertainment' days. My Wednesday group performed it.

STAND 11

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HANNAH MONTANA — 1:10, 3:50, 6:30, 9:10

BLOCKBUSTER THEATRE
Shang Cineplex

eigasai 2009
July 3 – 12
Cinema 1
Shang Cineplex

July 3 (Friday)
Tony Takitani 2:00 PM
Tom Dixon 4:30 PM
Memories of Tomorrow 7:00 PM

July 4 (Saturday)
Memories of Tomorrow 2:00 PM
ALWAYS – Sunset on Third Street 4:30 PM
Memories of Matsuko 7:00 PM

July 5 (Sunday)
Memories of Tomorrow 2:00 PM
Mind Game 4:30 PM
Memories of Matsuko 7:00 PM

July 6 (Monday)
The Mourners 2:00 PM
Mind Game 4:30 PM
Tom Dixon 7:00 PM

July 7 (Tuesday)
Tom Dixon 2:00 PM
Memories of Tomorrow 4:30 PM
ALWAYS – Sunset on Third Street 7:00 PM

July 8 (Wednesday)
The Mourners 2:00 PM
Tony Takitani 4:30 PM
Mind Game 7:00 PM

July 9 (Thursday)
Tom Dixon 2:00 PM
Memories of Tomorrow 4:30 PM
ALWAYS – Sunset on Third Street 7:00 PM

July 10 (Friday)
Tony Takitani 2:00 PM
Memories of Matsuko 4:30 PM
Tony Takitani 7:00 PM

July 11 (Saturday)
Tadpole and Dinner 2:00 PM
Tony Takitani 4:30 PM
Memories of Tomorrow 7:00 PM

July 12 (Sunday)
Mind Game 2:00 PM
ALWAYS – Sunset on Third Street 4:30 PM
Memories of Matsuko 7:00 PM

FREE ADMISSION
Tickets are issued one hour before the movie screening

Movies and schedules subject to change without prior notice.